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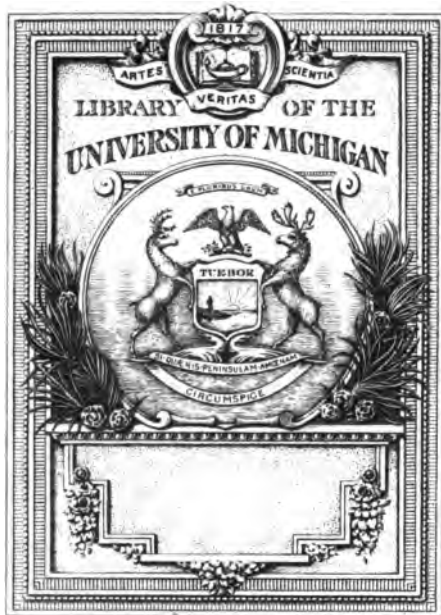
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# MUSA PISCATRIX

by  
John Buchan



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# **The Bodley Head Anthologies**

**EDITED BY R. H. CASE**

**MUSA PISCATRIX**

THE BODLEY HEAD  
ANTHOLOGIES

**English Epithalamies**

By ROBERT H. CASE

**Musa Piscatrix**

By JOHN BUCHAN

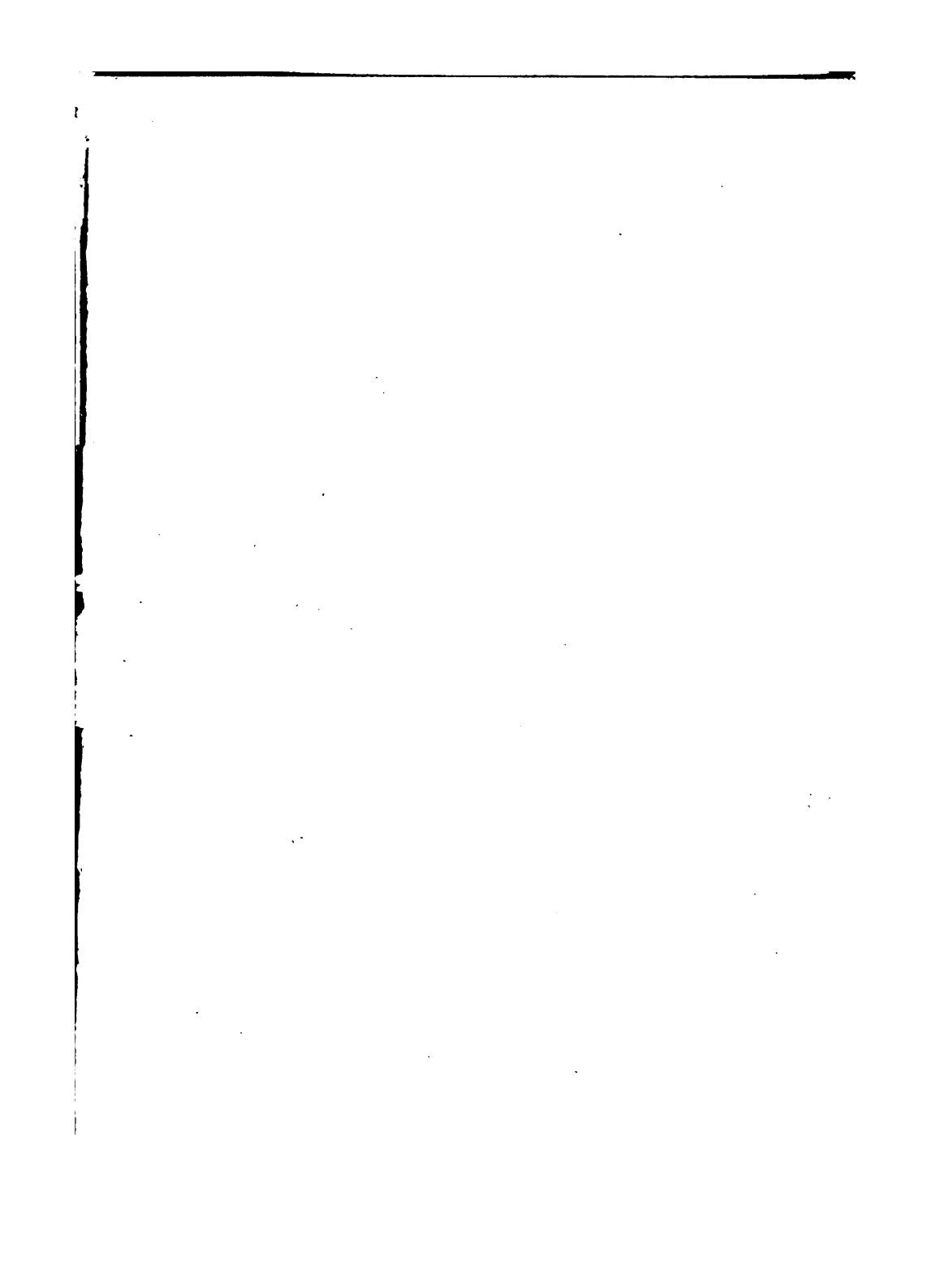
*IN PREPARATION*

**English Elegies**

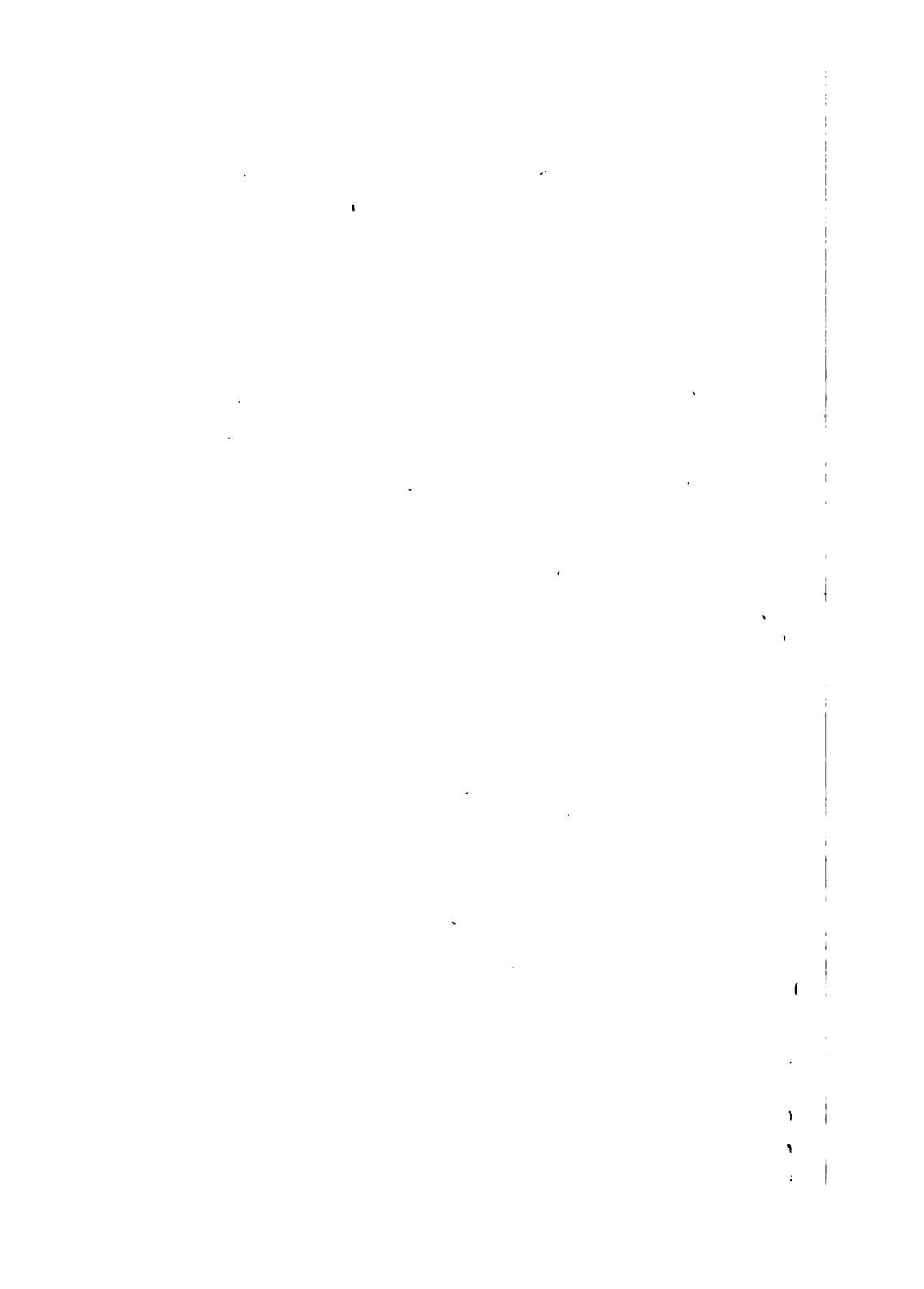
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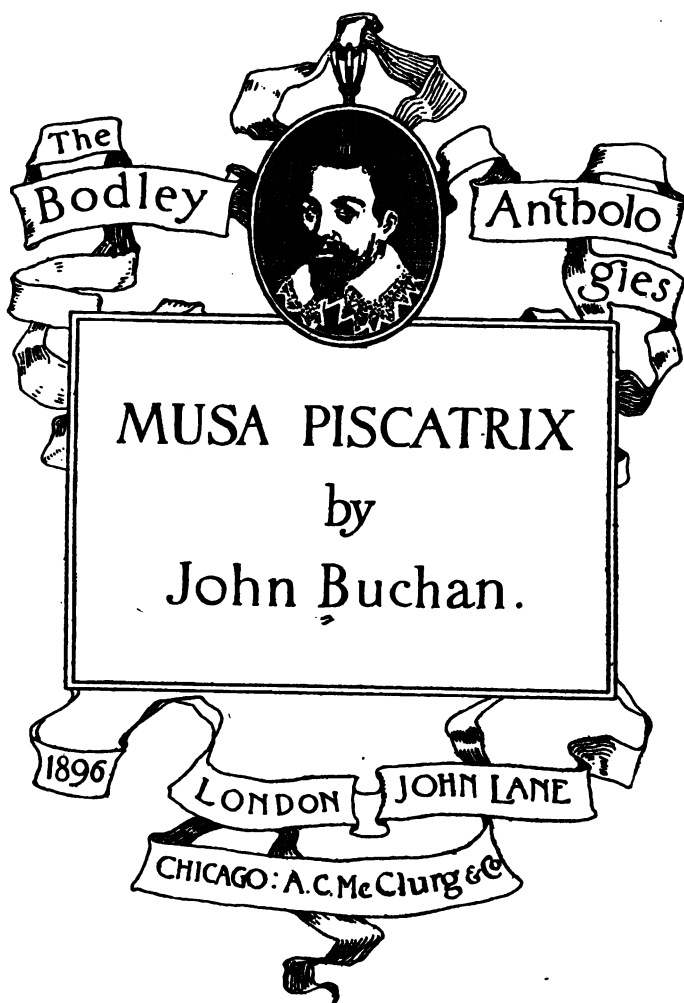
**English Satires**

By CHARLES HILL DICK









*Piscator non solum piscatur*

## NOTE

THE Editor wishes to express his thanks to Messrs Macmillan & Co. and Messrs Blackwood for their kind permission to include selections from the Poetry of Charles Kingsley, Matthew Arnold, and Thomas Tod Stoddart; and to Mr Robert Bridges, Mr Austin Dobson, and Mr Andrew Lang for a like favour in the case of verses from their own work.



To

**ANDREW LANG**

"Who glories to have thrown in air,  
High over arm, the trembling reed,  
By Ale and Kail, by Till and Tweed."



Angler's  
Sonnets  
6-16-45  
52239

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By E. PHILIP PIMLOTT

"God give thee strength, oh gentle trout, To pull the rascal in" . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
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## PREFACE

*This little book can scarcely claim for itself the proud title of an anthology. It is no serious collection of all the fishing songs in our literature judiciously estimated and edited; but only a small sheaf of the shorter, and, let me hope, the choicer verses gleaned from a narrow field. Some of the poems are mere lonely stanzas, a few scarcely so great; some have a taint of the humorous, others some admixture of the pathetic; all, I trust, possess the fragrance and piquancy of poetry which busies itself with things not far removed from the tastes of humankind. I have purposely taken little from any single writer, save in the case of Thomas Tod Stoddart, who is the poet-laureate of angling: and I have sought only to include verse which has some of the higher elements of poetry. When this is not so, it is because some interest of another kind attaches to the versifier or*



his work. Two songs I have admitted from "*The Complete Angler*," which, though scarce piscatorial in subject, are so by association. A strict chronological order has not been adopted, Dennys' poem, for instance, being put first as a suitable introduction, and the "*Complete Angler*" songs placed approximately in the order in which they appear in Walton's book. Of local verse of the "*Tyneside Garlands*" and "*Coquetdale Fishing Songs*" kind, I have taken but one example, since if a man once began to select there would be no limits to his choosing, so uniform is their mediocre worth. It is hoped that this little book may be a pleasant companion to all lovers of the sport, and furnish them with jingles of rhyme and ends of verses when they next go a-fishing.

The celebration of angling by the poets is a very English characteristic, and the fact that there is a literary grace about the art says much for an excellent taste. It is partly due, doubtless, to the great influence of Walton, who has in a manner classicised it; but partly, also, to our Northern love of the open air and open-air sports, and our Northern perception

## PREFACE

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*of the poetry of the green world. In old times, the Greeks were not a people who loved angling, though Homer makes a bare mention of it, and Theocritus has a spirited fishing idyll; no more were the Romans, though Horace uses the sport to turn a metaphor, and Ausonius has much interesting and mythic learning about the habits of fishes. San Gemignano sang prettily of March as the month for fishing and cheerful company, and Sanazzaro has "Piscatory Eclogues"; in Holland we have lampoons on unfortunate fishermen, together with some commonplace praise of the art; but it is really only in this land of ours that we find any quality of permanence in the poetry of angling. Dennys and Phineas Fletcher and their kind, Browne with his pleasant pastorals, Walton and all his band of musicians who have left us one of the most memorable books in the language, Gay and Thomson, Smollett and Armstrong and the eighteenth century school, Scott and the Romantics, down past Wordsworth and Hood to Charles Kingsley and Mr Andrew Lang—all have left us some legacy of song on the most delightful of all sports.*

*It is a fine sight to see how the Muse of angling tricks herself out in each of the fashions of the day. Under the Stuarts she masqueraded in sober habit, loving the meadows and little riverside inns and the quiet of the country. She affected a taste for theology and flavoured her talk with grave thoughts from the Scriptures and divines whose tastes were not too high for fishing. She was a bit of a scholar in her way, and would cite you learned instances from Pliny and Gesnerius, and vary the whole in the most charming fashion with a gipsy song or the snatch of a milk-maid's chorus. That was the golden age of angling, the hey-day of its fortunes. It passed, and there succeeded the periwigged times of Gay and Thomson, when the angler had the indescribable air of a poetic property, set down in a landscape to give it a "human interest." Still Gay wrote with vigour, and Thomson had been at the fishing before, if the gusto of his description goes for anything. This, the age of silver, slipped past in turn, and now we are entered on the age of iron, when the fisherman is a drone among the industrious, and the works of man trespass so far on the*

## PREFACE

xxi

*works of God, that it would appear that soon bricks and smoke (as one of our own poets also hath said) will "leave never a meadow outside Paradise." These are the days of controversy and ear-splitting noises, and little wonder if the Muse tarries long before she returns.*

*But while there is a distinction in angling poetry according to the age in which it is written, one might also divide it by the rivers of which it tells. I detect a subtle shade of difference in the poetry of each stream, as there is, so scientists tell us, a variation in the sound of their flow. In the North by Tweedside, and among the Welsh and Cumbrian hills, we have a more rugged and galloping verse to suit with the impetuous waters. In the low country, where the rivers are slow and idling, the poetry is quiet, telling of fields and well-fed cattle rather than black hills and the birds of the moor.*

*In all angling poetry, nevertheless, there are some notes of similarity, some common qualities, as in the natures of fishermen. For this character, now, I profess a peculiar liking. I see in him certain noticeable*

*traits which mark a man above his fellows. To begin with, he has a fine sense of the true pleasures of life and the aims which are worth the following. It is told of Stoddart, the great poet of fishing, that once when he went to visit a friend he was asked what his profession might then be. The answer is immortal. "Man," said the fisherman, "man, I'm an angler!" This is the true spirit of the brotherhood, a fine contempt for vulgar ambition and a knowledge of better things. Then there is a "camaraderie" among them, a good fellowship which knows no distinction between Charles Cotton, the great gentleman, and plain Master Izaak Walton, linen-draper in Fleet Street. To add to this, there is a freshness about them, a smell of the country and summer flowers, and a mellow wisdom, "the harvest of the quiet eye" and the heart not dulled to the finer influences of Nature.*

*So in the poetry of the art we discern many good qualities,—a geniality and humour which in the hands of inferior masters now and then becomes farce, but at its best is delicate and fanciful; a nervous force*

## PREFACE

xxiii

*in the verse which is indeed but the echo of the several streams to which the angler's fancy returns. If we look deeper, we find many accurate pictures of Nature and sage reflections upon human life. Further still, and here you have the core of the matter,—a cheerful idealism, a brave spirit, a gallant determination that the world is a good one and life well worth living.*

*In angling verse we do not look for any great perfection of art or depth of philosophical insight. The muse of fishing is not an introspective dame: she loves the crust of things better than the kernel. Yet the poetry is not without elements of a deeper seriousness, in the shape not only of moralisings and practical philosophy, but also of a rare perception of all but forgotten truths, the primary truths of Nature and life. There is in every man, deep down in his nature, something simple and primeval, a memory of an earlier and fresher life. Hence angling and hunting, travelling and sailing on the sea, are things of an enduring interest to humankind. All do not care for literature, not many for art, few indeed*

*for metaphysics ; but adventure and sport, "Crusoe" and "Walton," have always their legions of enthusiastic followers.*

*It is easy to go into heroics about the art and its poetry when it is scarcely needed ; for of all things it is the homeliest, preferring a russet gown to gay raiment. Yet still, I dare to think, it is a thing of abiding charm ; and whatever hard places we travel in, it will be at hand for our refreshment. For it has to do, not with passing fashions and outworn creeds, but with the great things of the world,—the return of spring, the stillness of summer weather, grey hills, clear waters, and the incommunicable freshness of the fields.*

*J. B.*

# MUSA PISCATRIX

## I

### THE ANGLER'S DELECTATION

Let me live harmlessly ; and near the brink  
Of Trent or Avon have a dwelling-place,—  
Where I may see my quill, or cork, down sink  
With eager bite of perch, or bleak, or dace ;  
And on the world and my Creator think :  
Whilst some men strive ill-gotten goods t' embrace ;  
And others spend their time in base excess  
Of wine,—or, worse, in war and wantonness :

Let them that list, these pastimes still pursue,  
And on such pleasing fancies feed their fill :—  
So I the fields and meadows green may view,  
And daily by fresh rivers walk at will,  
Among the daisies and the violets blue,  
Red hyacinth and yellow daffodil,  
Purple narcissus like the morning rays,  
Pale gander-grass, and azure culver-keys.

A

"The Secrets  
of Angling"  
(Book i.)  
and "The  
Complete  
Angler."



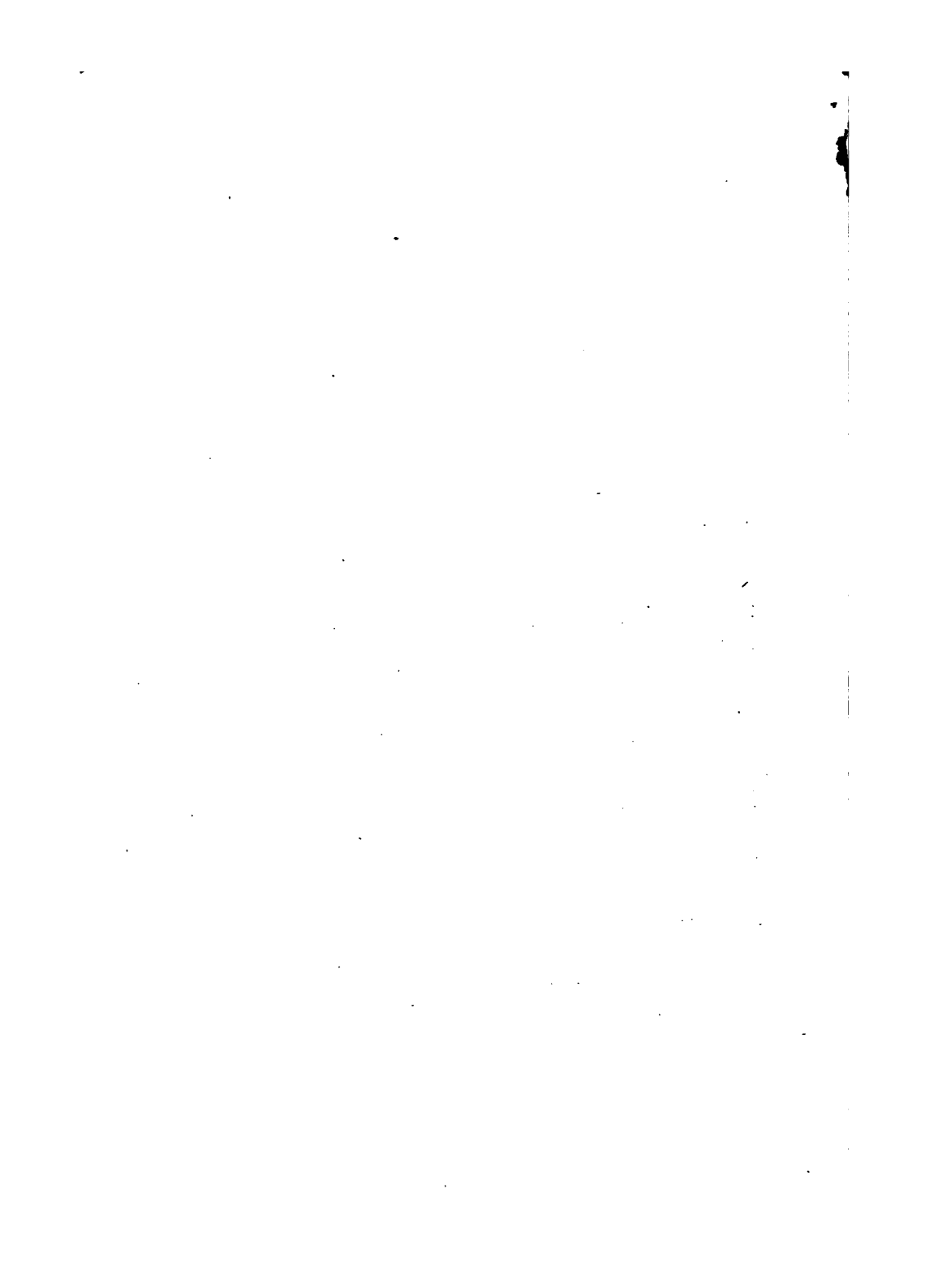
I count it higher pleasure, to behold  
The stately compass of the lofty sky ;  
And in the midst thereof, like burning gold,  
The flaming chariot of the world's great eye ;  
The watery clouds, that in the air up-roll'd,  
With sundry kinds of painted colours fly ;  
And fair Aurora, lifting up her head,  
Still blushing, rise from old Tithonus' bed ;

The hills and mountains raised from the plains ;  
The plains extended, level with the ground ;  
The grounds, divided into sundry veins ;  
The veins, enclosed with rivers running round ;  
These rivers, making way through Nature's chains,  
With headlong course into the sea profound ;  
The raging sea, beneath the valleys low,  
Where lakes and rills and rivulets do flow ;

The lofty woods,—the forests wide and long,—  
Adorned with leaves, and branches fresh and green,—  
In whose cool bowers the birds with many a song,  
Do welcome with their quire the summer's Queen ;  
The meadows fair, where Flora's gifts among  
Are intermixt, with verdant grass between ;  
The silver-scaled fish that softly swim  
Within the sweet brook's crystal wat'ry stream.

All these, and many more, of His creation  
That made the heavens, the Angler apt doth see,  
Taking therein no little delectation,  
To think how strange, how wonderful they be ;





## JOHN DENNYS

3

Framing thereof an inward contemplation,  
To set his heart from other fancies free ;  
And whilst he looks on these with joyful eye,  
His mind is rapt above the starry sky.

**4 WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

**II**

**"Antony  
and Cleo-  
patra," ii. 4.**

**Give me mine angle,—we'll to the river, there,  
My musick playing far off, I will betray  
Tawny-finn'd fishes ; my bended hook shall pierce  
Their shining jaws.**

## **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

**5**

### **III**

**The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish  
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,  
And greedily devour the treacherous bait.**

**"Much Ado  
About No-  
thing," iii. 1.**

## IV

## THE FISHER'S INVITATION

"Piscatory  
Eclogues,"  
i. 18.

Ah ! would thou knew'st how much it better were  
To bide among the simple fisher-swaines ;  
No shrieking owl, no night crow lodgeth here,  
Nor is our simple pleasure mixt with paines :  
Our sports begin with the beginning yeare ;  
In calms, to pull the leaping fish to land ;  
In roughs, to sing and dance along the golden sand.

. . . . .  
Here, with sweet bays, the lovely myrtles grow,  
Where th' ocean's fair-cheek'd maidens oft appear ;  
Here to my pipe they dancen in a row :  
No other swain may come to make them fear ;  
Yet my Amyntas there with me shall go.  
Proteus himself pipes to his flock hereby,  
Whom thou shalt heare, ne'er seen by any jealous eye.

V

THE FISHER'S SORROWS

But when the fisher's trade, once highly priz'd,  
And justly honour'd in those better times,  
By every lozel-groom I see despis'd ;  
No marvel if I hate my jocund rhymes,  
And hang my pipe upon a willow bough :  
Might I grieve ever, if I grieve not now.

" Piscatory  
Eclogues,"  
iv. 5.



"Piscatory  
Eclogues,"  
iv. 28.

## THE HEAVENLY FISHER

Those fisher-swains from whom our trade doth flow,  
That by the king of seas their skill were taught,  
As they their boats on Jordan wave did row,  
And, catching fish, were by a fisher caught;  
(Ah, blessed chance! much better was the trade,  
That being fishers, they were fishes made.)

## VII

## CONTENTMENT

## THE ANGLER'S LIFE

"The  
Complete  
Angler," and  
"The Purple  
Island,"  
xii. 3.

No empty hopes, no courtly fears him fright,  
No begging wants his middle-fortune bite,  
But sweet content exiles both misery and spite.  
His certain life, that never can deceive him,  
Is full of thousand sweets, and rich content ;  
The smooth-leaved beeches in the field receive him  
With coolest shade, till noon-tide's heat be spent :  
His life is neither toss'd in boisterous seas,  
Or the vexatious world, or lost in slothful ease :  
Pleas'd and full blest he lives, when he his God can please.

His bed, more safe than soft, yields quiet sleeps,  
While by his side his faithful spouse hath place ;  
His little son into his bosom creeps,  
The lively picture of his father's face.  
His humble house or poor state ne'er torment him ;  
Less he could like, if less his God had lent him ;  
And when he dies, green turfs do for a tomb content him.

10 WILLIAM BROWNE (of Tavistock)

VIII

"Britannia's FROM THE RIVER-GOD'S SONG OF HIS LOVE  
Pastorals,"  
l. 2.

The best of fishes in my flood  
Shall give themselves to be her food.  
The trout, the dace, the pike, the breame,  
The eele, that loves the troubled streame,  
The miller's thumbe, the hiding loach,  
The perch, the ever-nibbling roach,  
The shoals with whom is Tavie fraught,  
The foolish gudgeon quickly caught,  
And last the little minnow-fish,  
Whose chief delight the gravel is.

## WILLIAM BROWNE

II

### IX

#### A LOVELY SWAINE

Narcissus' change sure Ovid cleare mistooke,  
He dy'd not looking in a christall brooke,  
But (as those which in emulation gaze)  
He pinde to death by looking on this face.  
When he stood fishing by the river's brim,  
The fish would leap, more for a sight of him  
Than for the flie.

"Britannia's  
Pastorals,"  
i. 2.

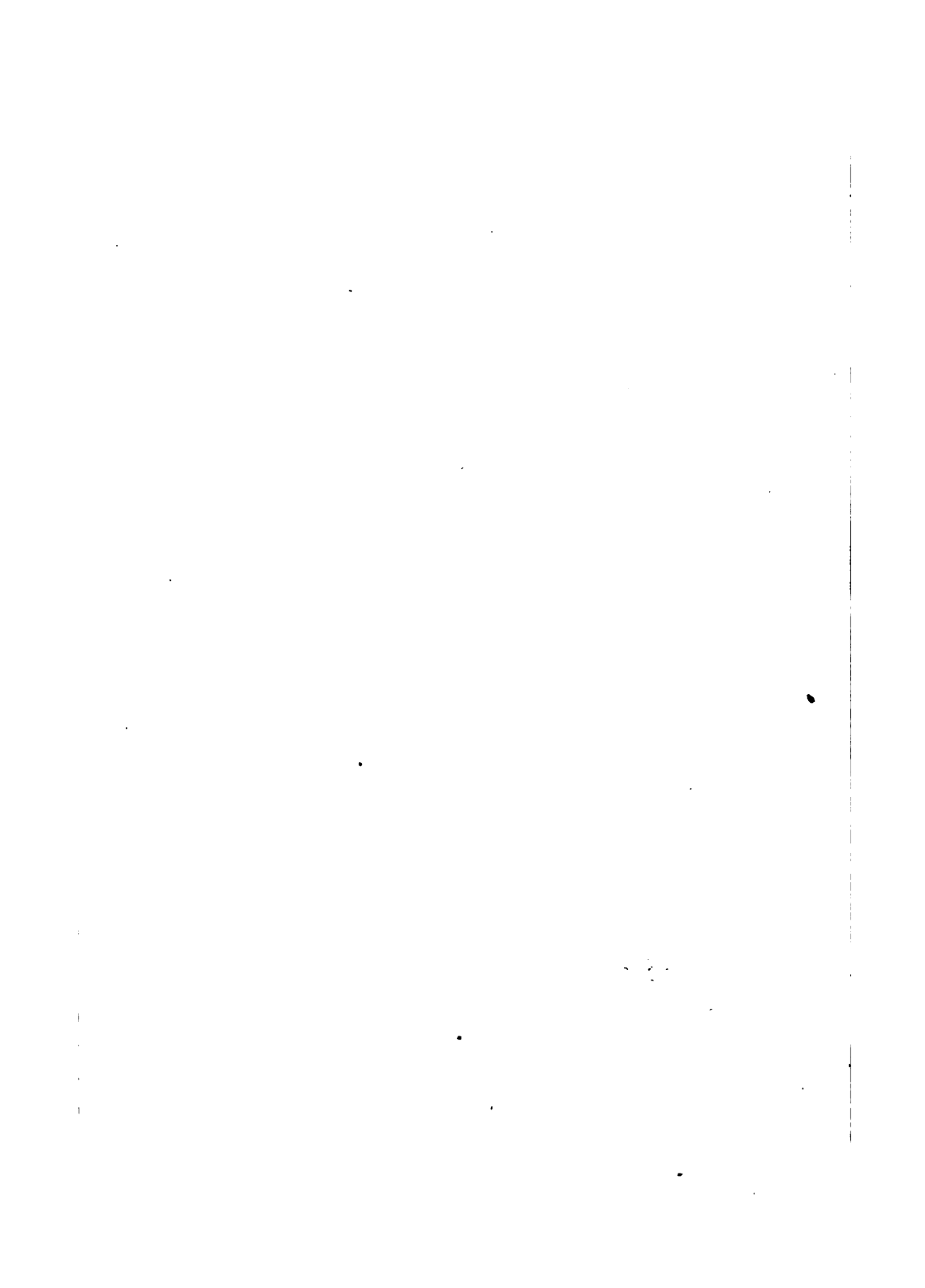
## X

"Britannia's  
Pastorals,"  
i. 5.

## WORM-FISHING

Now as an angler melancholy standing  
Upon a greene banke yielding room for landing,  
A wriggling yellow worrne thrust on his hooke,  
Now in the midst he throws, then in a nooke :  
Here pulls his line, there throws it in again,  
Mending his croke and baite, but all in vaine,  
He long stands viewing of the curling streame ;  
At last a hungry pike, or well-growne breame  
Snatch at the worrne, and hasting fast away,  
He, knowing it a fish of stubborn sway,  
Pulls up his rod, but soft (as having skill),  
Wherewith the hook fast holds the fishe's gill.  
Then all his line he freely yielded him,  
Whilst furiously all up and downe both swimme  
Th' insnared fish, here on the toppe doth scud,  
There underneath the bankes ; then in the mud ;  
And with his frantic fits so scares the shoal,  
That each one takes his hyde or starting hole :  
By this the pike, cleane wearied, underneath  
A willow lyes, and pants (if fishes breathe) ;  
Wherewith the angler gently pulls him to him,  
And, lest his haste might happen to undoe him,  
Layes downe his rod, then takes his line in hand,  
And by degrees getting the fish to land,  
Walkes to another poole : at length is winner  
Of such a dish as serves him for his dinner.





XI

LADIES ANGLING

Beneath, a shole of silver fishes glides,  
And plays about the gilded barges' sides ;  
The ladies, angling in the chrystal lake,  
Feast on the waters with the prey they take :  
At once victorious with their lines and eyes,  
They make the fishes and the men their prize.

"Poem on St  
James' Park,  
lately im-  
proved by  
His  
Majesty."



## XII

"The  
Complete  
Angler."  
Published in  
the second  
edition in  
1655.

TO MY DEAR BROTHER IZAAK WALTON,

UPON HIS

"COMPLETE ANGLER"

Erasmus in his learned colloquies  
Has mixt some toys, that by varieties  
He might entice all readers : for in him  
Each child may wade, or tallest giant swim.  
And such is this Discourse : there's none so low  
Or highly learn'd, to whom hence may not flow  
Pleasure and information ; both which are  
Taught us with so much art, that I might swear,  
Safely, the choicest critic cannot tell  
Whether your matchless judgment most excell  
In angling or its praise : where commendation  
First charms, then makes an art a recreation.  
'Twas so to me : who saw the cheerful spring  
Pictur'd in every meadow, heard birds sing  
Sonnets in every grove, saw fishes play  
In the cool crystal springs, like lambs in May ;  
And they may play, till anglers read this book ;  
But after, 'tis a wise fish 'scapes a hook.

## XIII

## ON A BANK AS I SATE A-FISHING

This day dame Nature seem'd in love :  
The lusty sap began to move ;  
Fresh juice did stir th' embracing vines,  
And birds had drawn their valentines.  
The jealous trout that low did lie,  
Rose at a well-dissembled lie ;  
There stood my friend, with patient skill,  
Attending of his trembling quill.  
Already were the eaves possest  
With the swift Pilgrim's daubed nest ;  
The groves already did rejoice  
In Philomèl's triumphing voice,  
The showers were short, the weather mild,  
The morning fresh, the evening smiled.

Joan takes her neat-rubb'd pail, and now  
She trips to milk the sand-red cow,—  
Where, for some sturdy foot-ball swain,  
Joan strokes a syllabub or twain,  
The fields and garden were beset  
With tulips, crocus, violet :  
And now, though late, the modest rose  
Did more than half a blush disclose.  
Thus all looks gay, and full of cheer,  
To welcome the new livery'd year.

" Reliquiæ  
Wottonianæ"  
and " The  
Complete  
Angler."

## XIV

"Reliquiae  
Wottonianae"  
and "The  
Complete  
Angler."

## COUNTRY PLEASURES

Quivering fears, heart-tearing cares,  
Anxious sighs, untimely tears,  
Fly, fly to courts,  
Fly to fond wordlings' sports,  
Where strain'd sardonic smiles are glosing still,  
And grief is forc'd to laugh against her will ;  
Where mirth's but mummery,  
And sorrows only real be.

Fly from our country pastimes, fly,  
Sad troops of human misery.  
Come, serene looks,  
Clear as the crystal brooks,  
Or the pure azur'd heaven, that smiles to see  
The rich attendance of our poverty :  
Peace and a secure mind,  
Which all men seek, we only find.

Abused mortals, did you know  
Where joy, heart's-ease, and comforts grow,  
You'd scorn proud towers,  
And seek them in these bowers ;  
Where winds, sometimes, our woods perhaps  
may shake,  
But blust'ring care could never tempest make ;  
Nor murmurs e'er come nigh us,  
Saving of fountains that glide by us.

Here's no fantastic masque, nor dance,  
But of our kids that frisk and prance ;  
Nor wars are seen,  
Unless upon the green  
Two harmless lambs are butting one the other,  
Which done, both bleating run each to his mother :  
And wounds are never found,  
Save what the ploughshare gives the ground.

Here are no entrapping baits  
To hasten too, too hasty fates,  
Unless it be  
The fond credulity  
Of silly fish, which, worldling like, still look  
Upon the bait, but never on the hook ;  
Nor envy, 'less among  
The birds, for prize of their sweet song.

Go, let the diving negro seek  
For gems hid in some forlorn creek :  
We all pearls scorn,  
Save what the dewy morn  
Congeals upon each little spire of grass,  
Which careless shepherds beat down as they pass :  
And gold ne'er here appears,  
Save what the yellow Ceres bears.

Blest silent groves ! Oh may you be  
For ever mirth's best nursery !  
May pure contents  
For ever pitch their tents

Upon these downs, these meads, these rocks,  
these mountains,  
And peace still slumber by these purling fountains,  
Which we may every year  
Meet when we come a-fishing here.

XV

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO  
HIS LOVE

"The  
Complete  
Angler" and  
Dyce's  
"Marlowe,"  
iii. 295.

Come live with me, and be my love ;  
And we will all the pleasures prove,  
That valleys, groves, or hills, or field,  
Or woods, and steepy mountains yield,—

Where we will sit upon the rocks,  
And see the shepherds feed our flocks,  
By shallow rivers ; to whose falls,  
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses ;  
And, then, a thousand fragrant posies ;  
A cap of flowers ; and a kirtle,  
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle ;

A gown made of the finest wool,  
Which from our pretty lambs we pull ;  
Slippers, lined choicely for the cold ;  
With buckles of the purest gold ;

A belt, of straw and ivy buds,  
With coral clasps, and amber studs ;  
And if these pleasures may thee move,  
Come live with me, and be my love.

Thy silver dishes for thy meat  
As precious as the gods do eat,  
Shall on an ivory table be  
Prepared each day for thee and me.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing  
For thy delight, each May morning.  
If these delights thy mind may move,  
Then live with me, and be my love.

## XVI

## THE MAID'S ANSWER

If all the world and love were young,  
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,  
These pretty pleasures might me move  
To live with thee and be thy love.

But Time drives flocks from field to fold  
When rivers rage, and rocks grow cold ;  
Then Philomel becometh dumb,  
And age complains of care to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields  
To wayward winter reckoning yields ;  
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,  
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,  
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,  
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten ;  
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw, and ivy buds,  
Thy coral clasps, and amber studs,—  
All these in me no means can move  
To come to thee, and be thy love.

What should we talk of dainties, then,  
Of better meat than's fit for men?  
These are but vain ; that's only good  
Which God hath blest, and sent for food.

"The  
Complete  
Angler," and  
"England's  
Helicon."



But could youth last ; and, love still breed ;  
Had joys no date ; nor age no need ;  
Then those delights my mind might move,  
To live with thee, and be thy love.

## XVII

## THE ANGLER'S SONG

"The  
Complete  
Angler."

As inward love breeds outward talk,  
The hound some praise, and some the hawk ;  
Some, better pleased with private sport,  
Use tennis ; some a mistress court :  
    But these delights I neither wish  
    Nor envy,—while I freely fish.

Who hunts, doth oft in danger ride ;  
Who hawks, lures oft both far and wide ;  
Who uses games, shall often prove  
A loser ; but who falls in love,  
    Is fetter'd in fond Cupid's snare :  
    My angle breeds me no such care.

Of recreation there is none  
So free as fishing is alone ;  
All other pastimes do no less  
Than mind and body both possess :  
    My hand alone my work can do ;  
    So I can fish and study too.

I care not, I, to fish in seas ;  
Fresh rivers best my mind do please ;  
Whose sweet calm course I contemplate  
And seek in life to imitate :  
    In civil bounds I fain would keep,  
    And for my past offences weep.

And when the tim'rous trout I wait  
To take, and he devours my bait,

How poor a thing, sometimes I find,  
Will captivate a greedy mind :  
    And when none bite, I praise the wise,  
    Whom vain allurements ne'er surprise.

But yet, though while I fish I fast,  
I make good fortune my repast ;  
And thereunto my friend invite,—  
In whom I more than that delight,—  
    Who is more welcome to my dish,  
    Than to my angle was my fish.

As well content no prize to take,  
As use of taken prize to make ;  
For so our Lord was pleased, when  
He fishers made fishers of men ;  
    Where, which is in no other game,  
    A man may fish and praise his name

The first men that our Saviour dear  
Did choose to wait upon him here,  
Blest fishers were ; and fish the last  
Food was, that he on earth did taste :  
    I therefore strive to follow those,  
    Whom he to follow him hath chose.

XVIII

THE ANGLER'S WISH

"The  
Complete  
Angler."

I in these flowery meads would be :  
These crystal streams should solace me,  
To whose harmonious bubbling noise,  
I with my angle would rejoice,  
    Sit here and see the turtle dove  
    Court his chaste mate to acts of love :

Or on that bank, feel the west wind  
Breathe health and plenty : please my mind,  
To see sweet dew-drops kiss these flowers,  
And, then, wash'd off by April showers :  
    Here, hear my Kenna sing a song,  
    There see a blackbird feed her young,

Or a laverock build her nest :  
Here give my weary spirits rest,  
And raise my low-pitch'd thoughts above  
Earth, or what poor mortals love :  
    Thus free from law-suits and the noise  
    Of princes' courts, I would rejoice :—

Or—with my Bryan, and a book—  
Loiter long days near Shawford-brook :  
There, sit by him ; and eat my meat :  
There see the sun both rise and set :  
There bid good morning to next day :  
There meditate my time away ;  
    And angle on ; and beg to have  
    A quiet passage to a welcome grave.

## XXX

## SONG

Come live with me, and be my love :  
 And we will some new pleasures prove  
 Of golden sands, and crystal brooks ;  
 With silken lines and silver hooks.

There will the river whipting run,  
 Wher't by thy eyes more than the sun ;  
 And there, the cunning'd fish will stay,  
 Dugging themselves they may betray.

When thou wilt swim in that live bath—  
 Each fish, which every channel hath,  
 Most anxiously to thee will swim,  
 Gladder to catch thee than thou him.

If thou to be so soon be't lost,  
 By sun, or moon—then dark'nest both ;  
 And if mine eyes have leave to see,  
 I need not their light, having thee.

Let others fesse with angling reeds,  
 And cut their legs with shells and weeds ;  
 Or trench'dunly poor fish bait  
 With stungling snares, or windowy net ;

Let coarse bold hands, from slimy nest,  
 The bodded fish in banks outwrest ;  
 Let curious traders, shave-silk flies,  
 Brownish poor wand'ring fishes' eyes.

DR JOHN DONNE

27

For thee, thou need'st no such deceit ;  
For thou, thyself, art thine own bait—  
That fish that is not catcht thereby,  
Is wiser far, alas, than I.

## XX

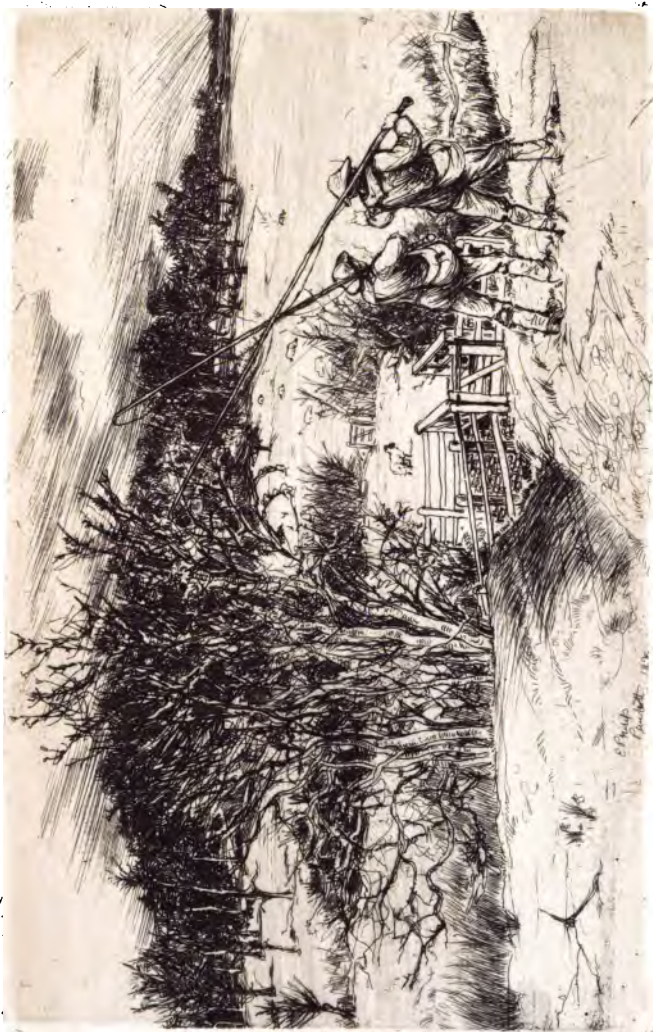
"The  
Complete  
Angler."

## THE FISHERMAN'S SONG

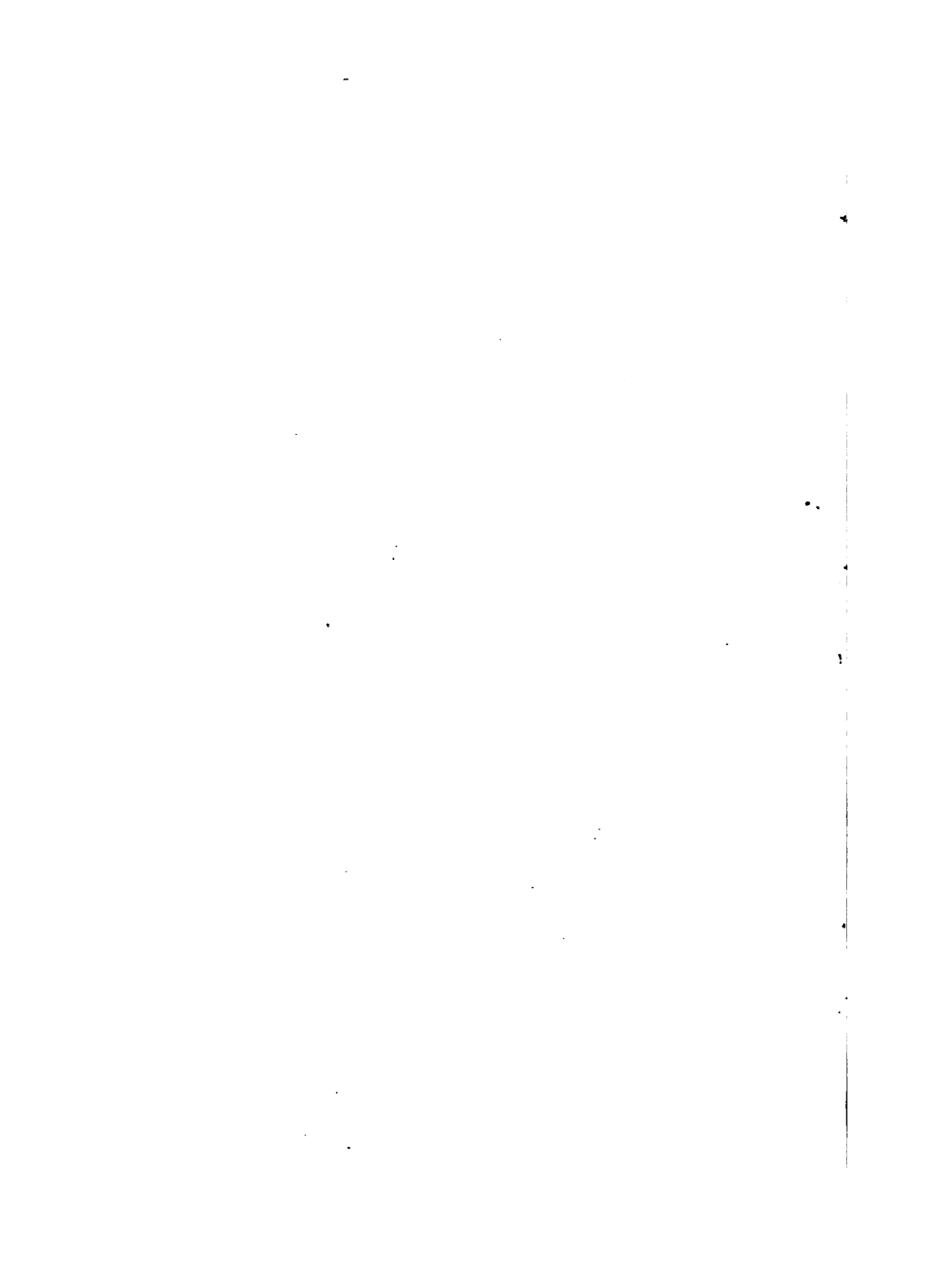
Oh! the gallant fisher's life,  
It is the best of any;  
'Tis full of pleasure, void of strife,  
And 'tis beloved by many:  
    Other joys  
    Are but toys,  
    Only this  
    Lawful is;  
    For our skill  
    Breeds no ill,  
    But content and pleasure.

In a morning up we rise,  
Ere Aurora's peeping:  
Drink a cup to wash our eyes,  
Leave the sluggard sleeping:  
    Then we go  
    To and fro,  
    With our knacks  
    At our backs,  
    To such streams  
    As the Thames,  
    If we have the leisure.

When we please to walk abroad  
For our recreation,  
In the fields is our abode,  
Full of delectation:







Where in a brook  
With a hook,  
Or a lake,  
Fish we take ;  
There we sit,  
For a bit,  
Till we fish entangle.

We have gentles in a horn,  
We have paste and worms too ;  
We can watch both night and morn  
Suffer rain and storms too.

None do here  
Use to swear,  
Oaths do fray  
Fish away ;  
We sit still,  
And watch our quill ;  
Fishers must not wrangle.

If the sun's excessive heat  
Make our bodies swelter,  
To an osier-hedge we get  
For a friendly shelter ;  
Where in a dike  
Pearch or pike,  
Roach or dace,  
We do chase,  
Bleak or gudgeon  
Without grudging ;  
We are still contented.

Or we sometimes pass an hour  
Under a green willow  
That defends us from a shower,  
Making earth our pillow ;  
    Where we may  
    Think and pray,  
    Before death  
    Stops our breath :  
    Other joys  
    Are but toys,  
And to be lamented.

## XXI

## AN OLD CATCH

Man's life is but vain ;  
For 'tis subject to pain,  
And sorrow, and short as a bubble :  
'Tis a hodge-podge of business,  
And money, and care ;  
And care, and money, and trouble.

But we'll take no care  
When the weather proves fair ;  
Nor will we vex now tho' it rain ;  
We'll banish all sorrow,  
And sing till to-morrow,  
And angle and angle again.

"The  
Complete  
Angler" and  
"Select  
Ayres and  
Dialogues to  
the Therbo-  
Lute and  
Basse Viol.  
By John  
Wilson and  
Charles  
Coleman,  
Henry  
Lawes, and  
others.  
London,  
1659."

## XXII

## THE RETIREMENT

"The  
Complete  
Angler,"  
Part ii.

Cotton's additions were made in 1676, when the first part had reached its fifth edition.

## I

Farewell, thou busy world! and may  
We never meet again:  
Here I can eat, and sleep, and pray,  
And do more good in one short day,  
Than he, who his whole age out wears  
Upon the most conspicuous theatres,  
Where nought but vanity and vice do reign.

## II

Good God! how sweet are all things here!  
How beautiful the fields appear!  
How cleanly do we feed and lie!  
Lord! what good hours do we keep!  
How quietly we sleep!  
What peace! what unanimity!  
How innocent from the lewd fashion,  
Is all our business, all our recreation!

## III

Oh, how happy here's our leisure  
Oh, how innocent our pleasure!  
Oh, ye valleys! Oh, ye mountains!  
Oh, ye groves, and crystal fountains,  
How I love at liberty,  
By turns, to come and visit ye!

## IV

Dear Solitude, the soul's best friend,  
That man acquainted with himself dost make,

And all his Maker's wonders to entend,  
With thee I here converse at will,  
And would be glad to do so still ;  
For it is thou alone, that keep'st the soul awake.

## V

How calm, and quiet a delight,  
Is it, alone  
To read, and meditate, and write ;  
By none offended and offending none.  
To walk, ride, sit, or sleep at one's own ease !  
And, pleasing a man's self, none other to displease.

## VI

Oh, my beloved nymph ! fair Dove !  
Princess of Rivers ! how I love  
Upon thy flowery banks to lie,  
And view thy silver stream,  
When gilded by a summer's beam !  
And in it, all thy wanton fry,  
Playing at liberty ;  
And, with my angle upon them,  
The all of treachery  
I ever learn'd industriously to try.

## VII

Such streams, Rome's yellow Tiber cannot show,  
The Iberian Tagus, or Ligurian Po :  
The Maese, the Danube, and the Rhine,  
Are puddle-water all, compared with thine :  
And Loire's pure streams yet too polluted are  
With thine much purer to compare ;

## C

The rapid Garonne, and the winding Seine,  
 Are both too mean,  
 Beloved Dove with thee  
 To vie priority :  
 Nay, Thame and Isis when conjoin'd submit,  
 And lay their trophies at thy silver feet.

## VIII

Oh, my beloved rocks ! that rise  
 To awe the earth and brave the skies :  
 From some aspiring mountain's crown,  
     How dearly do I love,  
 Giddy with pleasure to look down,  
     And from the vales to view the noble heights above !  
 Oh, my beloved caves ! from Dog-star's heat  
 And all anxieties my safe retreat ;  
 What safety, privacy, what true delight,  
 In th' artificial night  
 Your gloomy entrails make,  
 Have I taken, do I take !  
 How oft when grief has made me fly  
 To hide me from society,  
 Ev'n of my dearest friends, have I  
     In your recesses' friendly shade  
     All my sorrows open laid,  
 And my most secret woes entrusted to your privacy !

## IX

Lord ! would men let me alone ;  
 What an over-happy one  
     Should I think myself to be,  
 Might I, in this desert place,

## CHARLES COTTON

35

Which most men in discourse disgrace,  
Live but undisturb'd and free !  
Here in this despis'd recess,  
Would I, maugre winter's cold,  
And the summer's worst excess,  
Try to live out to sixty full years old !  
And all the while,  
Without an envious eye  
On any thriving under Fortune's smile,  
Contented live, and then—contented die.



## XXIII

"Poems,"  
1689.

## From THE CONTENTATION

That man is happy in his share,  
Who is warm clad, and cleanly fed,  
Whose necessities bound his care,  
And honest labour makes his bed.

Who free from debt, and clear from crimes,  
Honours those laws that others fear,  
Who ill of princes in worst times  
Will neither speak himself, nor hear.

Who from the busy world retires,  
To be more useful to it still,  
And to no greater good aspires,  
But only the eschewing ill.

Who with his angle, and his books,  
Can think the longest day well spent,  
And praises God when back he looks,  
And finds that all was innocent.

## XXIV

## THE ANGLER'S BALLAD

"Poems,"  
1689.

Away to the brook,  
All your tackle out-look,  
Here's a day that is worth a year's wishing ;  
See that all things be right,  
For 'tis a very spight  
To want tools when a man goes a-fishing.

. . . . .  
All these being on,  
'Tis high time we were gone,  
Down and upward, that all may have pleasure ;  
Till, here meeting at night,  
We shall have the delight  
To discourse of our fortunes at leisure.

The day's not too bright,  
And the wind hits us right,  
And all nature does seem to invite us ;  
We have all things at will  
For to second our skill,  
As they all did conspire to delight us.

On stream, now, or still,  
A large pannier we'll fill,  
Trout and grayling to rise are so willing ;  
I dare venture to say,  
'Twill be a bloody day,  
And we all shall be weary of killing.

Away, then, away,  
We lose sport by delay ;

But first, leave all our sorrows behind us ;  
If misfortune do come,  
We are all gone from home,  
And a-fishing she never can find us.

The angler is free  
From the cares that Degree  
Finds itself with, so often, tormented ;  
And although we should slay  
Each a hundred a day,  
'Tis a slaughter needs ne'er be repented.

And though we display  
All our wits to betray  
What were made for man's pleasure and diet,  
Yet both princes and states  
May, for all our quaint baits,  
Rule themselves and their people in quiet.

. . . . .  
We care not who says,  
And intends it dispraise,  
That an angler to a fool is next neighbour ;  
Let him prate ; what care we ?  
We're as honest as he ;  
And so let him take that for his labour.

We covet no wealth,  
But the blessing of health,  
And that greater, good conscience within :  
Such devotion we bring  
To our God and our King,  
That from either no offers can win.

CHARLES COTTON

39

While we sit and fish,  
We pray, as we wish,  
For long life to our king, James the Second.  
Honest anglers then may,  
Or they've very foul play,  
With the best of good subjects be reckon'd.

## XXV

## THE ARTS OF THE FISHERMAN

"The  
Author's  
Apology"  
for "The  
Pilgrim's  
Progress."

You see the ways the Fisher-man doth take  
To catch the fish ; what engines doth he make ?  
Behold how he engageth all his wits ;  
Also his snares, lines, angles, hooks, and nets.  
Yet fish there be, that neither hook, nor line,  
Nor snare, nor net, nor engine can make thine ;  
They must be grop'd for, and be tickled too,  
Or they will not be catch'd, whate'er you do.

## XXVI

## ANGLING

"Windsor  
Forest."

In genial spring, beneath the quivering shade,  
When cooling vapours breath along the mead,  
The patient fisher takes his silent stand,  
Intent, his angle trembling in his hand :  
With looks unmov'd, he hopes the scaly breed,  
And eyes the dancing cork and bending reed.  
Our plenteous streams a various race supply,  
The bright-eyed perch with fins of Tyrian dye ;  
The silver eel, in shining volumes roll'd ;  
The yellow carp, in scales bedropp'd with gold ;  
Swift trouts, diversified with crimson stains ;  
And pikes, the tyrants of the watery plains.

"Rural  
Sports,"  
Canto i.

## THE SPORT OF FISHING

As in successive course the seasons roll,  
So circling pleasures recreate the soul.  
When genial spring a living warmth bestows,  
And o'er the year her verdant mantle throws,  
No swelling inundation hides the grounds,  
But crystal currents glide within their bounds;  
The finny brood their wonted haunts forsake,  
Float in the sun, and skim along the lake,  
With frequent leap they range the shallow streams,  
Their silver coats reflect the dazzling beams.  
Now let the fisherman his toils prepare,  
And arm himself with every watery snare;  
His hooks, his lines, peruse with careful eye,  
Increase his tackle, and his rod re-tie.

When floating clouds their spongy fleeces drain,  
Troubling the streams with swift-descending rain,  
And waters, tumbling down the mountain's side,  
Bear the loose soil into the swelling tide;  
Then, soon as vernal gales begin to rise,  
And drive the liquid burthen through the skies,  
The fisher to the neighbouring current speeds,  
Whose rapid surface purls, unknown to weeds;  
Upon a rising border of the brook  
He sits him down, and ties the treacherous hook.  
Now expectation cheers his eager thought,  
His bosom glows with treasures yet uncaught,  
Before his eyes a banquet seems to stand,  
Where every guest applauds his skilful hand.

Far up the stream the twisted hair he throws,  
Which down the murmuring current gently flows ;  
When, if or chance or hunger's powerful sway  
Directs the roving trout this fatal way,  
He greedily sucks in the twining bait,  
And tugs and nibbles the fallacious meat :  
Now, happy fisherman, now twitch the line !  
How the rod bends ! behold, the prize is thine !  
Cast on the bank, he dies with gasping pains,  
And trickling blood his silver mail distains.

You must not every worm promiscuous use,  
Judgment will tell thee proper bait to choose ;  
The worm that draws a long immoderate size  
The trout abhors, and the rank morsel flies ;  
And if too small, the naked fraud's in sight,  
And fear forbids, while hunger doth invite.  
Those baits will best reward the fisher's pains,  
Whose polish'd tails a shining yellow stains.  
Cleanse them from filth, to give a tempting gloss,  
Cherish the sullied reptile race with moss ;  
Amid the verdant bed they twine, they toil,  
And from their bodies wipe their native soil.

But when the sun displays his glorious beams,  
And shallow rivers flow with silver streams,  
Then the deceit the scaly breed survey,  
Bask in the sun, and look into the day.  
You now a more delusive art must try,  
And tempt their hunger with the curious fly.

To frame the little animal, provide  
All the gay hues that wait on female pride,  
Let Nature guide thee ; sometimes golden wire  
The shining bellies of the fly require ;



The peacock plumes thy tackle must not fail,  
Nor the dear purchase of the sable's tail.  
Each gaudy bird some slender tribute brings,  
And lends the growing insect proper wings :  
Silks of all colours must their aid impart,  
And every fur promote the fisher's art.  
So the gay lady, with expensive care,  
Borrows the pride of land, of sea, and air ;  
Furs, pearls, and plumes, the glittering thing displays,  
Dazzles our eyes, and easy hearts betrays.

Mark well the various seasons of the year,  
How the succeeding insect race appear ;  
In this revolving moon one colour reigns,  
Which in the next the fickle trout disdains.  
Oft have I seen a skilful angler try  
The various colours of the treacherous fly ;  
When he with fruitless pain hath skimm'd the brook,  
And the coy fish rejects the skipping hook,  
He shakes the boughs that on the margin grow,  
Which o'er the stream a waving forest throw ;  
When, if an insect fall (his certain guide),  
He gently takes him from the whirling tide ;  
Examines well his form, with curious eyes,  
His gaudy vest, his wings, his horns and size.  
Then round his hook the chosen fur he winds,  
And on the back a speckled feather binds,  
So just the colours shine through every part,  
That Nature seems to live again in Art.  
Let not thy wary step advance too near,  
While all thy hope hangs on a single hair.  
The new-form'd insect on the water moves,  
The speckled trout the curious snare approves ;

Upon the curling surface let it glide,  
With natural motion from thy hand supplied ;  
Against the stream now let it gently play,  
Now in the rapid eddy roll away.  
The scaly shoals float by, and seiz'd with fear  
Behold their fellows toss'd in thinner air ;  
But soon they leap, and catch the swimming bait,  
Plunge on the hook, and share an equal fate.

When a brisk gale against the current blows,  
And all the watery plain in wrinkles flows,  
Then let the fisherman his art repeat,  
Where bubbling eddies favour the deceit.  
If an enormous salmon chance to spy  
The wanton errors of the floating fly,  
He lifts his silver gills above the flood,  
And greedily sucks in the unfaithful food ;  
Then downward plunges with the fraudulent prey,  
And bears with joy the little spoil away.  
Soon, in smart pain, he feels the dire mistake,  
Lashes the wave, and beats the foamy lake ;  
With sudden rage he now aloft appears,  
And in his eye convulsive anguish bears ;  
And now again, impatient of the wound,  
He rolls and wreathes his shining body round ;  
Then headlong shoots beneath the dashing tide,  
The trembling fins the boiling wave divide.  
Now hope exalts the fisher's beating heart,  
Now he turns pale, and fears his dubious art ;  
He views the tumbling fish with longing eyes,  
While the line stretches with the unwieldy prize,  
Each motion humours with his steady hands,  
And one slight hair the mighty bulk commands ;

Till tir'd at last, despoil'd of all his strength,  
The game athwart the stream unfolds his length.  
He now with pleasure views the gasping prize  
Gnash his sharp teeth, and roll his bloodshot eyes ;  
Then draws him to the shore, with artful care,  
And lifts his nostrils in the sickening air :  
Upon the burthen'd stream he floating lies,  
Stretches his quivering fins, and gasping dies.

Would you preserve a numerous finny race?  
Let your fierce dogs the ravenous otter chase ;  
The amphibious monster ranges all the shores,  
Darts through the waves, and every haunt explores ;  
Or let the gin his roving steps betray,  
And save from hostile jaws the scaly prey.

I never wander where the bordering reeds  
O'erlook the muddy stream, whose tangling weeds  
Perplex the fisher ; I nor choose to bear  
The thievish nightly net, nor barbed spear.  
Nor drain I ponds the golden carp to take,  
Nor troll for pikes, dispeoplers of the lake.  
Around the steel no tortur'd worm shall twine,  
No blood of living insect stain my line ;  
Let me less cruel cast the feather'd hook,  
With pliant rod athwart the pebbled brook,  
Silent along the mazy margin stray,  
And with the fur-wrought fly delude the prey.

## XXVIII

## THE SWEET O' THE YEAR

"The  
Seasons:  
Spring."

Now when the first foul torrent of the brooks,  
Swell'd with the vernal rains, is ebb'd away,  
And, whit'ning, down their mossy-tinctured stream  
Descends the billowy foam; now is the time,  
While yet the dark-brown water aids the guile,  
To tempt the trout: the well-dissembled fly,  
The rod fine tap'ring with elastic spring,  
Snatch'd from the hoary steed the floating line,  
And all thy slender watery stores, prepare.  
But let not on thy hook the tortur'd worm  
Convulsive twist in agonising folds;  
Which by rapacious hunger swallow'd deep,  
Gives, as you tear it from the bleeding breast  
Of the weak, hapless, uncomplaining wretch,  
Harsh pain and horror to the tender hand.

When with his lively ray the potent sun  
Has pierc'd the streams, and rous'd the finny race,  
Then, issuing cheerful, to thy sport repair;  
Chief should the western breezes curling play,  
And light o'er ether bear the shadowy clouds:  
High to their fount, this day, amid the hills,  
And woodlands warbling round, trace up the brooks;  
The next, pursue their rocky-channell'd maze,  
Down to the river, in whose ample wave  
Their little naiads love to sport at large.  
Just in the dubious point, where with the pool  
Is mix'd the trembling stream, or where it boils  
Around the stone, or from the hollow'd bank

Reverted plays in undulating flow :  
There throw, nice judging, the delusive fly ;  
And as you lead it round in artful curve,  
With eye attentive mark the springing game,  
Straight as above the surface of the flood,  
They wanton rise, or urg'd by hunger, leap,  
Then fix, with gentle twitch, the barbed hook :  
Some lightly tossing to the grassy bank,  
And to the shelving shore slow dragging some  
With various hand proportioned to their force.  
If yet too young, and easily deceived,  
A worthless prey scarce bends your pliant rod,  
Him, piteous of his youth, and the short space  
He has enjoy'd the vital light of heav'n,  
Soft disengage, and back into the stream  
The speckled captive throw. But should you lure  
From his dark haunt, beneath the tangled roots  
Of pendant trees, the monarch of the brook,  
Behoves you then to ply your finest art.

Long time he, following cautious, scans the fly ;  
And oft attempts to seize it, but as oft  
The dimpled water speaks his jealous fear.  
At last, whilst haply o'er the shaded sun  
Passes a cloud, he desp'rate takes his death,  
With sullen plunge. At once he darts along,  
Deep-struck, and runs out all the lengthen'd line ;  
Then seeks the farthest ooze, the shelt'ring weed,  
The cavern'd bank, his old secure abode ;  
And flies aloft and flounces round the pool,  
Indignant at the guile. With yielding hand,  
That feels him still, yet to his furious course

**JAMES THOMSON**

**49**

**Gives way, you, now retiring, following now  
Across the stream, exhaust his idle rage,  
Till, floating broad upon his breathless side,  
And to his fate abandon'd, to the shore  
You gaily drag your unresisting prize.**

## XXIX

## COUNTRY SPORTS

"The Castle  
of Indol-  
ence," l. 18.

But if a little exercise you choose,  
Some zest for ease, 'tis not forbidden here :  
Amid the groves you may indulge the muse,  
Or tend the blooms, and deck the vernal year ;  
Or softly stealing, with your watery gear,  
Along the brooks, the crimson-spotted fry  
You may delude ; the whilst, amused, you hear  
Now the hoarse stream, and now the zephyr's sigh,  
Attuned to the birds, and woodland melody.

XXX

## FISHING

"Art of  
Preserving  
Health,"  
Book iii.

But if the breathless chase o'er hill and dale  
Exceed your strength, a sport of less fatigue,  
Not less delightful, the prolific stream  
Affords. The crystal rivulet, that o'er  
A stony channel rolls its rapid maze,  
Swarms with the silver fry. Such, through the  
bounds  
Of pastoral Stafford, runs the brawling Trent;  
Such Eden, sprung from Cumbrian mountains; such  
The Esk, o'erhung with woods; and such the  
stream  
On whose Arcadian banks I first drew air,  
Liddel; till now, except in Doric lays  
Tun'd to her murmuring by her love-sick swains,  
Unknown in song; though not a purer stream,  
Through meads more flowery, more romantic groves,  
Rolls toward the western main. Hail, sacred flood!  
May still thy hospitable swains be blest  
In rural innocence; thy mountains still  
Teem with the fleecy race; thy tuneful woods  
Forever flourish; and thy vales look gay  
With painted meadows, and the golden grain!  
Oft, with thy blooming sons, when life was new,  
Sportive and petulant, and charm'd with toys,  
In thy transparent eddies have I lav'd:  
Oft trac'd with patient steps thy fairy banks,  
With the well-imitated fly to hook  
The eager trout, and with the slender line  
And yielding rod solicit to the shore



The struggling panting prey ; while vernal clouds  
And tepid gales obscur'd the ruffled pool,  
And from the deeps called forth the wanton swarms.

## XXXI

## LEVEN WATER

Pure stream, in whose transparent wave  
My youthful limbs I wont to lave,  
No torrents stain thy limpid source ;  
No rocks impede thy dimpling course,  
That sweetly warbles o'er its bed,  
With white, round, polish'd pebbles spread ;  
While, lightly poised, the scaly brood  
In myriads cleave the crystal flood ;  
The springing trout, in speckled pride  
The salmon, monarch of the tide,  
The ruthless pike, intent on war,  
The silver eel, the mottled par.  
Devolving from thy parent lake,  
A charming maze thy waters make,  
By bowers of birch, and groves of pine,  
And edges flower'd with eglantine.

Ode to  
Leven  
Water, in  
"Poems."

54 DR JOHN WOLCOT (Peter Pindar)

XXXII

"The  
New-Old  
Ballads."

TO A FISH OF THE BROOK

Why fleest thou away with fear?  
Trust me there's nought of danger here;  
I have no wicked hook,  
All covered with a tempting bait,  
Alas! to tempt thee to thy fate,  
And drag thee from the brook.

Oh harmless tenant of the flood,  
I do not wish to spill thy blood;  
For Nature unto thee  
Perchance has given a tender wife,  
And children dear, to charm thy life,  
As she hath done to me.

Enjoy thy stream, oh harmless fish,  
And when an angler for a dish,  
Through gluttony's vile sin,  
Attempts—a wretch—to pull thee out,  
God give thee strength, oh gentle trout,  
To pull the rascal in.

## XXXIII

## ON ETTRICK FOREST'S MOUNTAINS DUN

"Miscellaneous  
Poems."

On Ettrick Forest's mountains dun,  
'Tis blithe to hear the sportsman's gun,  
And seek the heath-frequenting brood  
Far through the noonday solitude;  
By many a cairn and trenched mound,  
Where chiefs of yore sleep lone and sound,  
And springs, where grey-hair'd shepherds tell  
That still the fairies love to dwell.

Along the silver streams of Tweed,  
'Tis blithe the mimic fly to lead,  
When to the hook the salmon springs,  
And the line whistles through the rings;  
The boiling eddy see him try,  
Then dashing from the current high,  
Till watchful eye and cautious hand  
Have led his wasted strength to land.

'Tis blithe along the midnight tide,  
With stalwart arm the boat to guide;  
On high the dazzling blaze to rear,  
And heedful plunge the barbed spear;  
Rock, wood, and scaur, emerging bright,  
Fling on the stream their ruddy light,  
And from the bank our band appears  
Like Genii, arm'd with fiery spears.

'Tis blithe at eve to tell the tale,  
How we succeed, and how we fail,

Whether at Alwyn's lordly meal,  
Or lowlier board of Ashestiel ;  
While the gay tapers cheerly shine,  
Bickers the fire, and flows the wine—  
Days free from thought, and nights from care,  
My blessing on the Forest fair !

WRITTEN UPON A BLANK LEAF IN  
"THE COMPLETE ANGLER""Poems of  
1819."

While flowing rivers yield a blameless sport,  
Shall live the name of Walton : Sage benign !  
Whose pen, the mysteries of the rod and line  
Unfolding, did not fruitlessly exhort  
To reverend watching of each still report  
That Nature utters from her rural shrine.  
Meek, nobly versed in simple discipline—  
He found the longest summer day too short,  
To his loved pastime given by sedgy Lee,  
Or down the tempting maze of Shawford brook—  
Fairer than life itself, in this sweet Book,  
The cowslip-bank and shady willow-tree ;  
And the fresh meads—where flowed, from every nook  
Of his full bosom, gladsome Piety !

## XXXV

"Angling  
Songs."

## THE ANGLER'S VINDICATION

Say not our hands are cruel,  
What deeds invite the blame?  
Content our golden jewel,  
No blemish on our name :  
Creation's lords  
We need no swords  
To win a withering fame.

Say not in gore and guile  
We waste the livelong day :  
Let those alone revile  
Who feel our subtle sway,  
When fancy-led  
The sward we tread  
And while the morn away.

Oh ! not in camp and court  
Our best delights we find,  
But in the far resort  
With water, wood, and wind,  
Where nature works  
And beauty lurks  
In all her craft enshrined.

There captive to her will,  
Yet 'mid our fetters free,  
We seek by singing rill  
The broad and shady tree,  
And ~~hap~~ our lay  
To flower and fay,  
Or mock the linnet's glee.

THOMAS TOD STODDART 59

Thus glides the golden hour,  
Until the chimes to toil  
Recall from brook and bower,  
Then, laden with our spoil,  
Slowly we part  
With heavy heart  
And leave the haunted soil.



## XXXVI

"Angling  
Songs."

## SONG

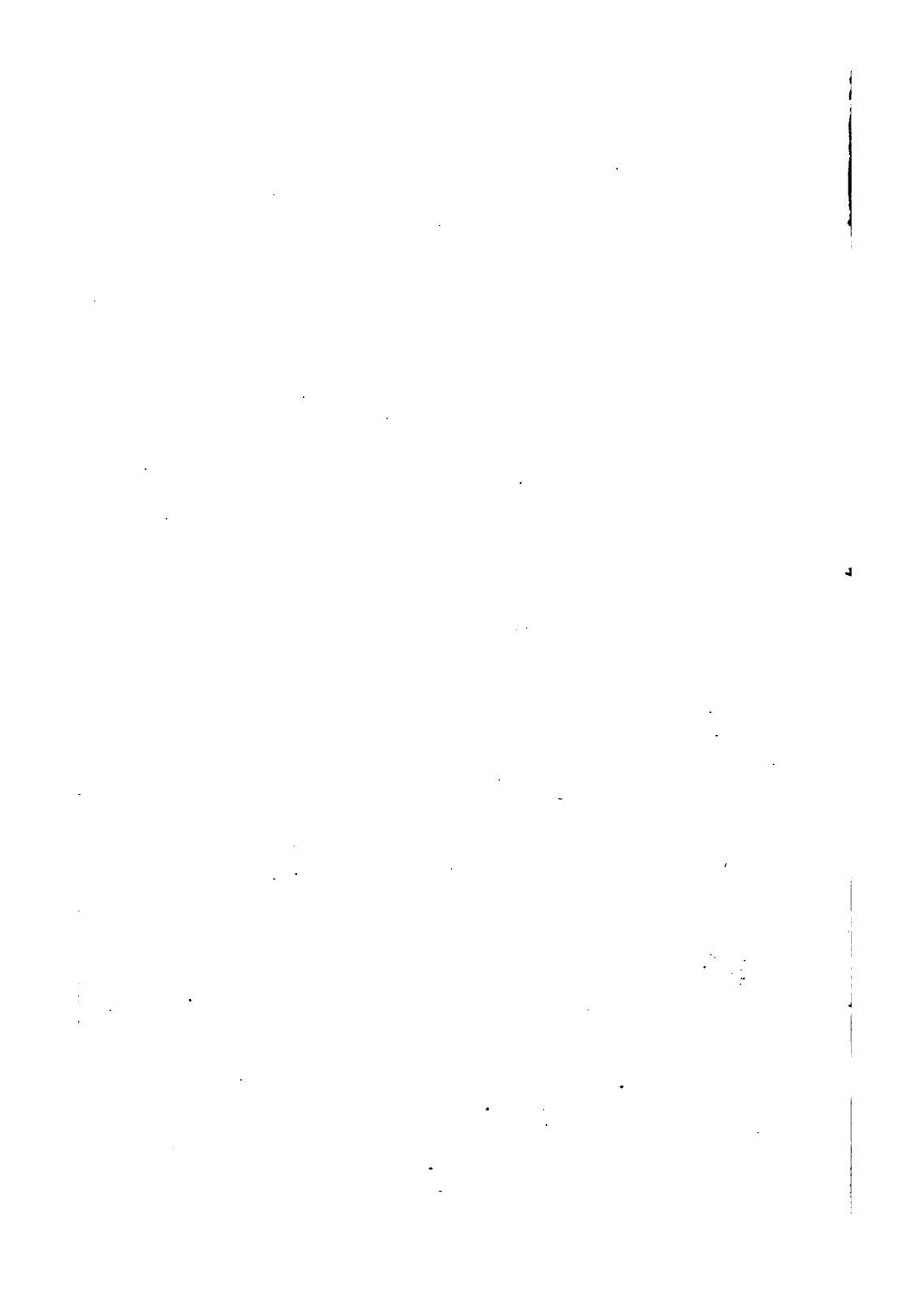
When homeward from the stream we turn  
Good cheer our sport replaces,  
There's liquor trembling in the glass,  
There's joy on all our faces!

We drink sweet healths, a merry round,  
We talk old stories over,  
And sing glad staves, like summer birds  
Below their leafy cover.

Thus cheerily our evenings pass,  
Till lulled below the quilting—  
We sleep our toils off, and are forth  
Before the lark is lilting.

All joy be with our heart's kin bold!  
May care's nets ne'er entangle,  
Nor woe nor poverty depress  
A brother of the angle!





XXXVII

THE HOLY-WELL POOL

"Angling  
Songs."

When the month is happy June,  
And her horns forsake the moon—  
When she greets us round and full  
Then we'll haunt the Holy-well pool.

Where I ween  
'Neath willow green,  
Bright fins are ever gliding ;  
'Mong the reeds  
And water-weeds  
They hold their wary hiding.

Not by moonlight need we tread  
Mossy bank or river-bed ;  
No living things 'neath moonlight prowl,  
Save beetle and bat and solemn owl ;

As she rides  
The old trout hides,  
Under the still bank deeper ;  
Nor sweet fly  
Nor minnow shy  
Can rouse the silent sleeper.

Rather at morn-tide we shall go  
To the Holy-well when the sun is low,  
Ere the bee visits the new-burst flower  
Or the noon breeze shakes the bower ;  
Then the trout  
Sails round about

Beyond the osier bushes,  
Or descries  
His winged prize  
Among the whispering rushes.

Then we'll seek the Holy-well,  
Or when eve glides up the dell,  
And the cushat all unseen  
Coo among the larch-wood green,  
Stealing soft  
Along the croft  
We'll beat the shady water,  
Till to rest  
With arm opprest  
Night turns us from the slaughter.

XXXVIII

THE RIVER

"Angling  
Songs."

Through sun-bright lakes,  
Round islets gay,  
The river takes  
Its western way,  
And the water-chime  
Soft zephyrs time  
Each gladsome summer day.

The starry trout,  
Fair to behold,  
Roameth about  
On fin of gold ;  
At root of tree  
His haunt you may see,  
Rude rock or crevice old.

And hither dart  
The salmon grey,  
From the deep heart  
Of some sea-bay ;  
And herling wild  
Is here beguiled  
To hold autumnal play.

Oh ! 'tis a stream  
Most fair to see,  
As in a dream  
Flows pleasantly ;  
And our hearts are woo'd  
To a kind sweet mood  
By its wondrous witchery.

## XXXIX

"Angling  
Songs."

## THE YELLOW FIN'S O' YARROW

The yellow fins o' Yarrow dale!

I kenna whar they've gane tae;  
Was ever trouts in Border vale  
Sae comely or sae dainty?

They had baith gowd and spanglit rings,  
Wi' walth o' pearl amang them;  
An' for sweet luve o' the bonny things,  
The heart was laith to wrang them.

But he that angles Yarrow ower  
(Maun changes ever wanken?)  
Frae our Lady's Loch to Newark Tower,  
Will find the stream forsaken.

Forsaken ilka bank and stane  
O' a' its troots o' splendour:  
Auld Yarrow's left sae lorn and lane  
Ane scarcely wad hae kenn'd her.

Waes me! The ancient yellow fin  
I marvel whar he's gane tae;  
Was ever trout in Forest rin  
Sae comely or sae dainty?

XL

THE ANGLER'S TRYSTING-TREE

"Angling  
Songs."

Sing, sweet thrushes, forth and sing !  
Meet the morn upon the lea ;  
Are the emeralds of spring  
On the angler's trysting-tree ?  
Tell, sweet thrushes, tell to me,  
Are there buds on our willow-tree ?  
Buds and birds on the trysting-tree ?

Sing, sweet thrushes, forth and sing !  
Have you met the honey-bee,  
Circling upon rapid wing  
Round the angler's trysting-tree ?  
Up, sweet thrushes, up and see ;  
Are there bees at our willow-tree ?  
Birds and bees at the trysting-tree ?

Sing, sweet thrushes, forth and sing !  
Are the fountains gushing free ?  
Is the south wind wandering  
Through the angler's trysting-tree ?  
Up, sweet thrushes, tell to me,  
Is the wind at our willow-tree ?  
Wind or calm at the trysting-tree ?

Sing, sweet thrushes, up and sing !  
Wile us with a merry glee,  
To the flowery haunts of spring—  
To the angler's trysting-tree.



66      THOMAS TOD STODDART

Tell, sweet thrushes, tell to me,  
Are there flowers 'neath our willow-tree?  
Spring and flowers at the trysting-tree?

XLI

YE WARDERS OF THE WATERS

"Angling  
Songs."

Ye warders of the waters !  
Is the alder'd stream-side free ?  
Hath the salmon sped  
From his winter bed  
Adown to the azure sea ?  
Rideth afloat  
The fisher's boat  
Below the white thorn tree ?

Go forth, ye anglers jovial !  
The waters are open wide ;  
No longer we ward  
From vernal sward ;  
The glittering salmon glide ;  
Free at your will  
The crystal rill,  
And tuneless torrent-side.

Ho ! warders of the waters !  
Is the yellow trout at feed ?  
And the March flies brown  
Are they sailing down  
Where current and zephyr lead ?  
See you abroad  
With pliant rod  
Some gentle brother speed ?

Go forth, ye anglers jovial !  
The ring of the trout we spy,

And the south winds pour  
In a pleasant shower  
The merry March-brown fly ;  
With vigorous wand  
The fisher band  
Among the dark pools ply.

XLII

THE BONNIE TWEED

"Angling  
Songs."

Let ither anglers chuse their ain,  
And ither waters tak' the lead ;  
O' Hielan' streams we covet nane,  
But gie to us the bonnie Tweed !  
And gie to us the cheerfu' burn  
That steals into its valley fair—  
The streamlets that at ilka turn  
Sae saftly meet an' mingle there.

The lanesome Talla and the Lyne,  
An' Manor wi' its mountain rills,  
An' Etterick, whose waters twine  
Wi' Yarrow frae the forest hills ;  
An' Gala too, and Teviot bright,  
An' mony a stream o' playfu' speed ;  
Their kindred valleys a' unite  
Amang the braes o' bonnie Tweed.

There's no a hole abune the Crook,  
Nor stane nor gentle swirl aneath,  
Nor drumlie rill nor faëry brook,  
That daunders thro' the flowery heath,  
But ye may fin' a subtle troot,  
A' gleamin' ower wi' starn an' bead,  
An' mony a sawmon sooms about  
Below the bields o' bonnie Tweed.

Frae Holylee to Clovenford,  
A chancier bit ye canna hae

So gin ye tak' an angler's word,  
Ye'd through the whins an' ower the brae,  
An' work awa' wi' cunnin' hand  
Yer birzy hackles, black and reid;  
The saft sough o' a slender wand  
Is meetest music for the Tweed!

Oh the Tweed! the bonnie Tweed!  
O' rivers it's the best;  
Angle here, or angle there,  
Troots are soomin' ilka where,  
Angle east or west.

XLIII

THE ANGLER'S INVITATION

"Angling  
Songs."

Come when the leaf comes, angle with me,  
Come when the bee hums over the lea,  
    Come with the wild flowers—  
    Come with the mild showers—  
Come when the singing bird calleth for thee!

Then to the stream side, gladly we'll hie,  
Where the grey trout glide silently by,  
    Or in some still place  
    Over the hill face  
Hurrying onward, drop the light fly.

Then, when the dew falls, homeward we'll speed  
To our own loved walls down on the mead,  
    There, by the bright hearth,  
    Holding our night mirth,  
We'll drink to sweet friendship in need and in deed.

## XLIV

"Angling  
Songs."

## THE ANGLER'S CHOICE

Where torrents foam,  
While others roam  
Among the yielding heather,  
Some river meek  
We'll forth and seek,  
And lay our lines together.

Some sylvan stream,  
Where shade and gleam  
Are blended with each other;  
Below whose bank  
The lilies lank  
All humbler flowers ensmother.

Where cushats coo  
And ring-doves woo  
The shining channel over,  
From leavy larch  
Or birchen arch—  
Their unmolested cover.

There daily met,  
No dark regret  
Shall cloud our noon of pleasure;  
We'll carry rule  
O'er stream and pool  
And none to claim a measure!

With tackles rare  
On chosen hair,

THOMAS TOD STODDART 73

March fly and minnow tender,  
We shall invite  
The scaly wight  
To eye them and surrender.

And when out-worn,  
We'll seek some thorn  
With shadow old and ample,—  
The natural ground  
Moss-laid around,  
An angler's resting temple!



## XLV

"Angling  
Songs."

## THE HAPPY ANGLER

Below a shady hazel tree  
An angler trimmed his flies,  
Singing, hey derry! trout that are merry  
No longer, no longer are wise.

Of dapper make and ruddy hue  
'Twas a jovial blade I ween,  
With his hey derry, fresh from the ferry,  
Over the meadows so green.

Right gladsomely he eyed the stream,  
And shook his wand anon,  
With a hey derry! brown as a berry  
The winding waters run.

Oh! well I wat that jovial blade  
Is one of the gentle band,  
With his hey derry, trout that are merry  
Swim to the angler's hand.

Derry, hey derry!  
Trout that are merry  
Swim to the angler's hand!





XLVI

THE ANGLER'S GRAVE

"Angling  
Songs."

Sorrow, sorrow, bring it green!  
 True tears make the grass to grow ;  
 And the grief of the good, I ween,  
 Is grateful to him that sleeps below.  
 Strew sweet flowers, free of blight—  
 Blossoms gathered in the dew :  
 Should they wither before night,  
 Flowers and blossoms bring anew.

Sorrow, sorrow, speed away  
 To our angler's quiet mound,  
 With the old pilgrim, twilight grey,  
 Enter thou on the holy ground ;  
 There he sleeps, whose heart was twined  
 With wild stream and wandering burn,  
 Wooer of the western wind !  
 Watcher of the April morn !

Sorrow at the poor man's hearth !  
 Sorrow in the halls of pride !  
 Honour waits at the grave of worth  
 And high and low stand side by side.  
 Brother angler ! slumber on,  
 Haply thou shalt wave the wand,  
 When the tide of time is gone,  
 In some far and happy land.

"Poems."

## THE ANGLER'S FAREWELL

"Resigned, I kissed the rod."

Well! I think it is time to put up!  
For it does not accord with my notions,  
Wrist, elbow, and chine,  
Stiff from throwing the line,  
To take nothing at last by my motions.

I ground-bait my way as I go,  
And dip in at each watery dimple;  
But however I wish  
To inveigle the fish,  
To my gentle they will not play simple!

Though my float goes so swimmingly on,  
My bad luck never seems to diminish;  
It would seem that the Bream  
Must be scarce in the stream,  
And the Chub, tho' it's chubby, be thinnish!

Not a Trout there can be in the place,  
Not a Grayling or Rud worth the mention;  
And although at my hook  
With attention I look,  
I can ne'er see my hook with a Tench on!

At a brandling once Gudgeon would gape,  
But they seem upon different terms now;  
Have they taken advice,  
Of the "Council of Nice,"  
And rejected their "Diet of Worms" now?

In vain my live minnow I spin,  
 Not a Pike seems to think it worth snatching;  
     For the gut I have brought,  
     I had better have bought  
 A good rope that was used to Jack-Ketching!

Not a nibble has ruffled my cork,  
 It is vain in this river to search then;  
     I may wait till it's night,  
     Without any bite,  
 And at roost-time have never a Perch, then!

No Reach can I meet with—no Bleak,  
 Save what in the air is so sharp now;  
     Not a Dace have I got,  
     And I fear it is not

Carpe diem, a day for the Carp now!

Oh! there is not a one-pound prize  
 To be got in this fresh-water-lottery!

    What then can I deem  
     Of so fishless a stream  
 But that 'tis—like St Mary's—ottery?

For an Eel I have learned how to try,  
 By a method of Walton's own showing—

    But a fisherman feels  
     Little prospect of Eels,  
 In a path that's devoted to towing!

I have tried all the water for miles,  
 Till I'm weary of dipping and casting,

    And hungry and faint—  
     Let the fancy just paint  
 What it is, without Fish, to be Fasting!

And the rain drizzles down very fast,  
While my dinner-time sounds from a far bell—  
So, wet to the skin,  
I'll e'en back to my inn,  
Where at least I'm sure of a Bar-bell!

XLVIII

ANGLING

Go, take thine angle, and with practised line,  
 Light as the gossamer, the current sweep;  
 And if thou failest in the calm still deep,  
 In the rough eddy may the prize be thine.  
 Say thou'rt unlucky where the sunbeams shine;  
 Beneath the shadow, where the waters creep,  
 Perchance the monarch of the brook shall leap—  
 For fate is ever better than design.  
 Still persevere; the giddiest breeze that blows,  
 For thee may blow with fame and fortune rife;  
 Be prosperous—and what reck if it arose  
 Out of some pebble with the stream at strife;  
 Or that the light wind dallied with the boughs?  
 Thou art successful;—such is human life.

"Sixty-five  
 Sonnets,  
 with pre-  
 fatory re-  
 marks on  
 the Sonnet,"  
 published  
 anony-  
 mously in  
 1818.



## XLIX

Quoted in  
"Hamilton's  
Parodies."

## THE FISHER'S WELCOME

We twa ha' fished the Kale sae clear,  
And streams o' mossy Reed;  
We've tried the Wansbeck and the Wear,  
The Teviot and the Tweed;  
An' we will try them ance again,  
When summer suns are fine;  
An' we'll throw the flies thegither yet,  
For the days o' auld lang syne.

'Tis mony years sin' first we sat  
On Coquet's bonny braes,  
An' mony a brother fisher's gane,  
An' clad in his last claithea.  
An' we maun follow wi' the lave,  
Grim death he heucks us a';  
But we'll hae anither fishing bout  
Afore we're taen awa'.

For we are hale and hearty baith,  
Tho' frosty are our pows,  
We still can guide our fishing graith,  
And climb the dykes and knowes;  
We'll mount our creels and grip our gads,  
An' throw a sweeping line,  
An' we'll hae a splash amang the lads,  
For the days o' auld lang syne.

Tho' Cheviot's top be frosty still,  
He's green below the knee,  
Sae don your plaid and tak' your gad,  
An' gae awa' wi' me.

## THOMAS DOUBLEDAY

81

Come busk your flies, my auld compeer,  
We're fidgen' a' fu' fain,  
We've fished the Coquet mony a year,  
And we'll fish her ance again.

An' hameward when we toddle back,  
An' nicht begins to fa',  
An' ilka chiel mann hae his crack,  
We'll crack aboon them a'.  
When jugs are toomed and coggens wet,  
I'll lay my loof in thine;  
We've shown we're gude at water yet,  
An' we're little warse at wine.

We'll crack how many a creel we've filled,  
How many a line we've flung,  
How many a ged and saumon killed,  
In days when we were young.  
We'll gar the callants a' look blue,  
An' sing anither tune;  
They're boasting, aye, o' what they'll do,  
We'll tell them what we've dune.

"Miscellaneous  
Poems."

## L

## From THE INVITATION

To Tom Hughes

Come away with me, Tom,  
Term and talk are done ;  
My poor lads are reaping,  
Busy every one.  
Curates mind the parish,  
Sweepers mind the court ;  
We'll away to Snowdon  
For our ten days' sport ;  
Fish the August evening  
Till the eve is past,  
Whoop, like boys, at pounders  
Fairly played and grassed.  
When they cease to dimple,  
Lunge, and swerve, and leap,  
Then up over Siabod,  
Choose our nest, and sleep.  
Up a thousand feet, Tom,  
Round the lion's head,  
Find soft stones to leeward  
And make up our bed.  
Eat our bread and bacon,  
Smoke the pipe of peace,  
And, ere we be drowsy,  
Give our boots a grease.  
Homer's heroes did so,  
Why not such as we ?  
What are sheets and servants ?  
Superfluity !

LI

THE SOUTH WIND

"Miscellaneous  
Poems."

O blessed drums of Aldershot !  
 O blessed south-west train !  
 O blessed, blessed Speaker's clock,  
 All prophesying rain !  
  
 O blessed yaffil, laughing loud !  
 O blessed falling glass !  
 O blessed fan of cold gray cloud !  
 O blessed smelling grass !  
  
 O bless'd south wind that toots his horn  
 Through every hole and crack !  
 I'm off at eight to-morrow morn  
 To bring such fishes back !

## LII

"Poems."

## KILLARNEY

Oh Mr Froude, how wise and good  
To point us out the way to glory,  
They're no great shakes, those Snowdon Lakes,  
And all their pounders myth and story.  
Blow Snowdon! What's Lake Gwynant to Killarney,  
Or spluttering Welsh to tender blarney, blarney, blarney?

So, Thomas Hughes, sir, if you choose,  
I'll tell you where we think of going,  
To swate and far o'er cliff and scar,  
Hear horns of Elfland faintly blowing;  
Blow Snowdon! There's a hundred lakes to try in,  
And fresh caught salmon daily, frying, frying, frying.

Geology and botany  
A hundred wonders shall diskiver,  
We'll flog and troll in strid and hole,  
And skim the cream of lake and river.  
Blow Snowdon! Give me Ireland for my pennies;  
Hurrah! for salmon, grilse, and—Dennis, Dennis, Dennis!

## LIII

Here at my feet what wonders pass,  
What endless, active life is here !  
What blowing daisies, fragrant grass !  
An air-stirr'd forest, fresh and clear.

Scarce fresher is the mountain-sod  
Where the tired angler lies, stretch'd out,  
And, eased of basket and of rod,  
Counts his day's spoil, the spotted trout.

From  
"Lines  
written in  
Kensington  
Gardens" in  
"Lyric and  
Elegiac  
Poems."

## LIV

"Shorter  
Poems,"  
Book ii. 5.

## SUMMER ON THAMES

A rushy island guards the sacred bower,  
And hides it from the meadow, where in peace  
The lazy cows wrench many a scented flower,  
Robbing the golden market of the bees :  
    And laden barges float  
    By banks of myosote ;  
    And scented flag and golden flower-de-lys  
    Delay the loitering boat.

Sometimes an angler comes, and drops his hook  
Within its hidden depths, and 'gainst a tree  
Leaning his rod, reads in some pleasant book,  
Forgetting soon his pride of fishery,  
    And dreams, or falls asleep,  
    While curious fishes peep  
    About his nibbled bait, and scornfully  
    Dart off and rise and leap.

LV

BALLADE OF THE TWEED

"Ballades in  
Blue China."

The ferox rins in rough Loch Awe,  
A weary cry frae ony toun;  
The Spey that louns o'er linn and fa',  
They praise a' ither streams aboon;  
They boast their braes o' bonny Doon;  
Gie me to hear the ringing reel,  
Where shilfas sing, and cushata croon  
By fair Tweed-side, at Ashiestiel!

There's Ettrick, Meggat, Ail, and a',  
Where trout swim thick in May and June;  
Ye'll see them take in showers o' snaw  
Some blinking, cauldrie April noon:  
Rax ower the palmer and March-broun,  
And syne we'll show a bonny creel,  
In spring or summer, late or soon,  
By fair Tweed-side, at Ashiestiel!

There's mony a water, great or sma',  
Gaes singing in his siller tune  
Through glen and heugh, and hope and shaw,  
Beneath the sun-light or the moon:  
But set us in our fishing shoon  
Between the Caddon-burn and Peel,  
And syne we'll cross the heather broun  
By fair Tweed-side at Ashiestiel!



## Envoy.

Deil take the dirty, trading loon  
Wad gar the water ca' his wheel,  
And drift his dyes and poisons down  
By fair Tweed-side at Ashiestiel!

## LVI

## THE LAST CHANCE

**"Grass of Parnassus."**

Within the streams, Pausanias saith,  
That down Cocytus valley flow,  
Girdling the gray domain of Death,  
The spectral fishes come and go ;  
The ghosts of trout flit to and fro,  
Persephone, fulfil my wish,  
And grant that in the shades below  
My ghost may land the ghosts of fish.

"Grass of  
Parnassus."

## APRIL ON TWEED

As birds are fain to build their nest  
The first soft sunny day,  
So longing wakens in my breast  
A month before the May,  
When now the wind is from the West,  
And Winter melts away.

The snow lies yet on Eildon Hill,  
But soft the breezes blow.  
If melting snows the waters fill,  
We nothing heed the snow,  
But we must up and take our will,—  
A fishing will we go!

Below the branches brown and bare,  
Beneath the primrose lea,  
The trout lies waiting for his fare,  
A hungry trout is he;  
He's hooked, and springs and splashes there  
Like salmon from the sea.

Oh, April tide's a pleasant tide,  
However times may fall,  
And sweet to welcome Spring, the Bride,  
You hear the mavis call;  
But all adown the water-side  
The Spring's most fair of all.

LVIII

From THE BALLADE OF THE REAL  
AND IDEAL

"Books and  
Bookmen."

O visions of salmon tremendous,  
Of trout of unusual weight,  
Of waters that wander as Ken does,  
Ye come through the Ivory Gate!  
But the skies that bring never a "spate,"  
But the flies that catch up in a thorn,  
But the creel that is barren of freight,  
Through the portals of horn!

. . . . .  
Fair dreams of things golden and great,  
Ye come through the Ivory Gate;  
But the facts that are bleak and forlorn,  
Through the portals of horn.

"Rhymes à  
la Mode."

## THE LAST CAST

## The Angler's Apology

Just one cast more ! how many a year  
Beside how many a pool and stream,  
Beneath the falling leaves and sere,  
I've sighed, reeled up, and dreamed my dream.

Dreamed of the sport since April first,  
Her hands fulfilled of flowers and snow,  
Adown the pastoral valleys burst  
Where Ettrick and where Teviot flow.

Dreamed of the singing showers that break,  
And sting the lochs, or near or far,  
And rouse the trout, and stir "the take,"  
From Urigil to Lochinvar.

Dreamed of the kind propitious sky  
O'er Ari Innes brooding grey ;  
The sea trout, rushing at the fly,  
Breaks the black wave with sudden spray !

Brief are man's days at best ; perchance  
I waste my own, who have not seen  
The castled palaces of France  
Shine on the Loire in summer green.

And clear and fleet Eurotas still,  
 You tell me, laves his reedy shore,  
 And flows beneath his fabled hill  
 Where Dian drave the chase of yore.

And "like a horse unbroken" yet  
 The yellow stream, with rush and foam,  
 'Neath tower, and bridge, and parapet,  
 Girdles his ancient mistress, Rome!

I may not see them, but I doubt  
 If seen I'd find them half so fair  
 As ripples of the rising trout  
 That feed beneath the elms of Yair.

Nay, Spring I'd meet by Tweed or Ail,  
 And Summer by Loch Assynt's deep,  
 And Autumn in that lonely vale  
 Where wedded Avons westward sweep.

Or where, amid the empty fields,  
 Among the brackens of the glen,  
 Her yellow wreath October yields,  
 To crown the crystal brows of Ken.

Unseen, Eurotas, southward steal,  
 Unknown, Alpheus, westward glide,  
 You never heard the ringing reel,  
 The music of the waterside!

Though Gods have walked your woods among,  
 Though nymphs have fled your banks along;

You speak not that familiar tongue  
Tweed murmurs like my cradle song.

My cradle song,—nor other hymn  
I'd choose, nor gentler requiem clear  
Than Tweed's, that through death's twilight dim,  
Mourned in the latest Minstrel's ear !

## LX

From A GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL "Old-World  
Idylls."

Yet still he loved the chase, and held  
That no composer's score excelled  
The merry horn, when Sweetlip swelled  
    Its jovial riot ;  
But most his measured words of praise  
Caressed the angler's easy ways,—  
His idly meditative days,—  
    His rustic diet.

Not that his "meditating" rose  
Beyond a sunny summer doze ;  
He never troubled his repose  
    With fruitless prying ;  
But held, as law for high and low,  
What God withholds no man can know,  
And smiled away inquiry so,  
    Without replying.



## EPILOGUE

## EPILOGUE

To Master Izaak Walton

Master, I trow 'tis many a year  
Since last you fared a-fishing here,  
Since first you cast your eager flies  
Athwart the streams of Paradise.  
And we, we love to read thy book  
By placid stream and trickling brook,  
When trout are scarce or winds are loud,  
Or when the sky hath never a cloud.  
But you are in a happier mead,  
Where fish are ever on the feed.

And, master, these are evil days  
When scarce a man our art may praise.  
For some they say 'tis most unfit  
For bearded men in peace to sit,  
And watch a meditative hook,  
Or read a cheerful, pleasant book,  
When they should to their work be hieing,  
For time is short and all are dying.

And some they hold 'tis most unkind  
Around the hook the silk to wind,  
And hold a fish with barb of steel,—  
As if, forsooth, a fish could feel.

But some there were both stout and hale  
Who did not bow the knee to Baal.  
Good Master Stoddart, now with God,  
Full well he loved to walk the sod  
On a fresh, westering April day  
And see the sportive salmon play.

And the great singer of the north,  
He loved by stream to wander forth;  
He hated not the rod and line,  
He called thee "Walton, sage, benign."  
And some there be in London town,  
Of bookish men, who often down  
To the green country come to try,  
Their long-loved skill of fishery.

Why weary thee with idle praise,  
Thou wanderer in Elysian ways?  
Where skies are fresh and fields are green,  
And never dust nor smoke is seen,  
Nor news sheets, nor subscription-lists,  
Nor merchants, nor philanthropists.  
For there the waters fall and flow  
By fragrant banks, and still below  
The great three-pounders rise and take  
The "palmer," "alder," "dun," or "drake."  
Now by that stream, if there you be,  
I prithee keep a place for me.

J. B.



## NOTES



## NOTES

### I.

THIS poem is attributed in the "Complete Angler" to a "Jo. Davers, Esq." It has also been attributed to Donne and Davies. *The Secrets of Angling*, by J. D., was first published in 1613, and since then has become one of the rarest books in the whole of angling literature, where rare books are somewhat common. Many other passages in the poem are excellent beside the one quoted, notably a delightful account, in the third book, of the qualities which a good angler should possess. In the Stationers' Registers, the author's name is given as John Dennys.

### VIII. IX. X.

The work of a charming and little-known poet. His *Britannia's Pastorals* give a wonderful picture of old English country life and its pleasures—maypole-dancing, angling, hunting, and love-making. His works have recently been published in the *Muses' Library* (Lawrence & Bullen).

### XX.

Dr Johnson has a Latin rendering of the last stanza of this song, which is one of the most famous in the literature of the sport—

"Nunc, per gramina fusi,  
Densa fronde salicti,  
Dum defenditur imber,  
Molles ducimus horas," etc.

## XXXII.

The writings of the once famous Peter Pindar, though now little read, are often full of real humour and surprising skill in epigram. The poem quoted is from the *New-Old Ballads*, a collection of verses in ridicule of old-fashioned poetry.

## XXXIV.

This sonnet is interesting, since nowadays one often hears it said that Wordsworth disliked angling. He has another admirable sonnet on *Walton's Lives*.

" There are no colours in the fairest sky  
 So fair as these ; the feather whence the pen  
 Was shaped that traced the lives of these good Men,  
 Dropped from an angel's wing. With moistened eye,  
 We read of faith and purest charity,  
 In Statesman, Priest, and humble Citizen.  
 Oh ! could we copy their mild virtues, then  
 What joy to live ; what blessedness to die !  
 Methinks their very names shine still and bright,  
 Apart—like glow-worms in the woods of spring,  
 Or lonely tapers shooting far a light  
 That guides and cheers—or, seen like stars on high,  
 Satellites burning in a lucid ring,  
 Around meek Walton's heavenly memory."

## XXXV.

Thomas Tod Stoddart was one of the few notable writers on angling who were also famous in the practice of the art. The stories of his fishing exploits are almost beyond credit. Those who desire to read of him may do so in the delightful memoir of him by his daughter prefixed to his *Angling Songs* (Blackwood), where, also, they will find Sir George Douglas's excellent memorial verses.

## XLII.

The Talla is a lonely stream which joins Tweed at Tweedsmuir, a few miles below its source. The Lyne and the Manor enter from opposite sides above the town of Peebles. The other streams are too well known to need mention. The Crook is a small inn a mile below Tweedsmuir, formerly a halting-place for the coach between Edinburgh and Dumfries.

## L. LI. LII.

Kingsley's three fishing songs I have included more for the interest associated with the man than for their intrinsic excellence. Indeed, if the truth be told, they are somewhat like doggerel. In his prose writings he has some good descriptions of angling.





## **STREAMS AND RIVERS**



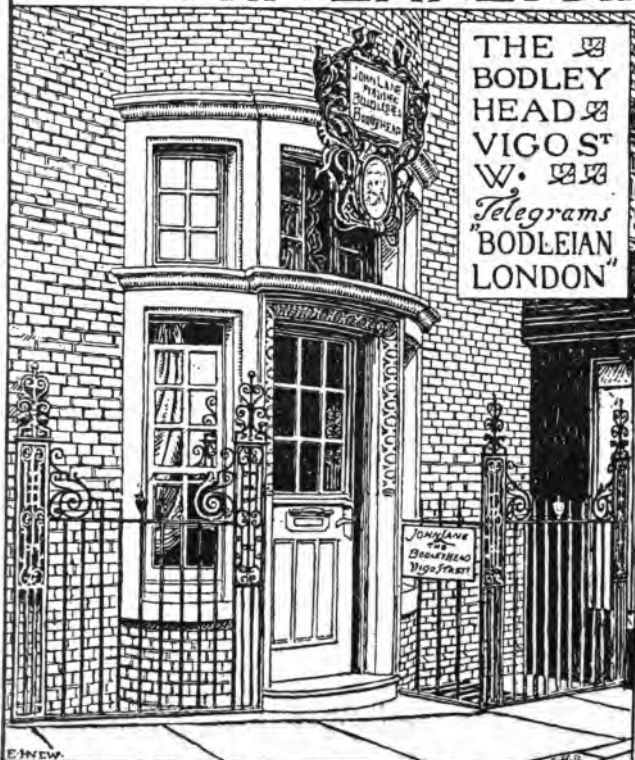
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